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**Helplines set up for mothers**

## Alert for 1,700 women over HIV doctor

By JEREMY LAURANCE AND STEPHEN FARRELL

MORE than 1,700 women were offered HIV tests yesterday after a junior doctor who helped to deliver their babies and carry out hysterectomies was found to be infected with the Aids virus.

The doctor, whose identity and sex has not been revealed, worked at four hospitals in Gloucestershire and Essex between February 1991 and January this year. The doctor told authorities about the infection after discovering it last month.

The records of 50,000 patients were checked and yesterday the health authorities began contacting those who were felt to be at any risk. They are being offered counselling and HIV testing, and helplines have been set up to provide advice.

Medical experts insisted that the chances of any patient being infected were extremely low and there was no risk at all of the virus being transmitted to babies.

The doctor worked at the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital from February 1991 until October 1993; King George Hospital, Redbridge, Essex, from August 1993 until February 1995; Whipp's Cross Hospital, Waltham Forest, Essex, from March 1995 until January this year, apart from last March; and at Southend Hospital from March 1996 to October 1996.

Dr Georgia Duckworth, regional epidemiologist for

North Thames told a press conference yesterday that the 1,752 women being contacted had undergone Caesareans, major gynaecological surgery or complicated vaginal deliveries involving forceps and stitches.

The case is the second involving an obstetrician this year, and over the past decade more than a dozen British healthcare workers have been found to be infected with HIV. But in no case has the infection been passed to a patient.

Dr Duckworth emphasised the low risk of transmission, pointing out that there had been only two reported instances anywhere in the world of a healthcare worker infecting his patients.

Nevertheless, the Director of the Conservative Family Institute called for compulsory HIV testing for doctors — particularly those from countries where Aids is endemic — while the Patients Association said that the infected doctor should be named.

Dr Adrian Rogers, an Essex GP, said: "The case for testing is becoming unanswerable. It is becoming an embarrassment for the health service that these scares keep cropping up."

Dr Rogers, who will stand as a Tory candidate in the general election, said that he had written to the Health Secretary last month after the death from Aids of the Nigeri-

an obstetrician Olukayode Fasawe who had worked in three British hospitals. "I know there is reluctance in the profession because of a misplaced sense of political correctness. We should introduce tests for all migrant doctors — the highest risk group."

But the British Medical Association said that would be a misuse of public money. Doctors were at much greater risk of being infected by patients than the other way about. "A negative HIV test could provide a false reassurance because the person tested may have been very recently infected and it can take up to three months to show a positive result. Equally, the person could be exposed to an HIV risk after the test."

The Health Department said that because the overall risk of transmission was very small, routine testing could not be justified.

The Patients Association meanwhile protested that the doctor's identity was being concealed. But NHS managers insisted that maintaining confidentiality was essential to avoid deterring other doctors who may be infected in the future from coming forward.

The hotline for worried patients in London and Essex is 0800 146271 and the one for Gloucestershire patients is 0800 146091. Calls are free.

Dr Stuttford, page 2



Adrian Targett, 42, with a replica of Cheddar Man's skeleton in the Somerset caves. They are linked through the female line of descent.

## History teacher bones up on ancestor

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A HISTORY teacher at a Somerset school discovered yesterday that he had a Stone Age ancestor who lived 9,000 years ago.

Genetic tests on Cheddar Man, a young hunter-gatherer whose well-preserved skeleton was discovered in the Cheddar Caves in 1903, have established a link to Adrian Targett, 42, a teacher at Kings of Wessex Community School in Cheddar.

The remarkable discovery was made after Philip Priestley, a television producer, asked the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford to carry out tests on samples of DNA taken from the skeleton,

which is now in the Natural History Museum in London. The results are to be broadcast as part of a series on archaeology in Somerset later this year.

Samples were also taken from children and teachers at schools in the Cheddar area, and from people whose families had been in the area for generations. To the astonishment of the scientists, a close match was found between Cheddar Man and Mr Targett, proving that they are linked through the female line of descent.

Yesterday, after the news was broken to him, Mr Targett said: "I'm absolutely overwhelmed. It is very strange news to receive. I'm not sure how I feel at the

moment. I'm just wondering how I can work Cheddar Man into lessons about the rise of the Nazis."

The Oxford team studied mitochondrial DNA, the kind found in parts of the cells used for generating energy. Unlike nuclear DNA, which carries genes from mothers and fathers, mitochondrial DNA is inherited unchanged down the maternal line. It was used, for example, to prove that bones found in a pit in Russia were those of the murdered Romanovs, the Russian royal family.

Mitochondrial DNA is more plentiful and easier to recover from ancient bones



Cheddar Man's skull

Continued on page 2, col 5

**Littlewoods halts Freemans talks**

Littlewoods, the pools and retailing group, has broken off negotiations to buy the £95 million Freemans mail order business from Sears. The move could start a bidding scramble for Freemans and leaves Littlewoods' own development plans in disarray. **Page 28, 28**

**Paedophile jailed**

Keith Laverack, 52, a senior social services manager, was jailed for 18 years at Chester Crown Court after 15 sexual assaults against children in care. **Page 3**

**Penalty kick**

Substitutes, the table-top football game invented at Tunbridge Wells in 1947, is no longer to be made in Britain. 250 jobs will be lost. **Page 25**

**Foreign exchange rates**  
Sterling 2.46, Belgium 16.50, France 6.55, Germany 1.36, Denmark 16.00, Greece 167.00, Italy 1.36, Japan 146.00, Netherlands 1.45, Norway 13.76, Sweden 10.46, Switzerland 1.48, USA 1.65, ECU 1.36, Luxembourg 1.36, Portugal 200.48, Spain 166.64, Austria 13.76, Finland 5.94, Ireland 7.88, Greece 167.00, Denmark 16.00, Netherlands 1.45, Norway 13.76, Sweden 10.46, Switzerland 1.48, USA 1.65, ECU 1.36, Luxembourg 1.36, Portugal 200.48, Spain 166.64, Austria 13.76, Finland 5.94, Ireland 7.88.

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## Blair pledges food agency as 'consumer's champion'

By JILL SHERMAN, POLLY NEWTON, MICHAEL HORSNELL AND VALERIE ELLIOTT

TONY BLAIR exploited Cabinet tensions over the food safety scare as he announced last night that if a Labour government were elected it would set up an independent food standards agency.

The Labour leader has appointed Professor Philip James, director of the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, to ensure that the proposed agency will operate "openly and transparently".

Professor James said that the agency would report to the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, although he suggested that Health might take the lead responsibility.

Speaking at the Scottish

Labour Party Conference in Inverness, Mr Blair said: "The case is now unanswerable for a powerful food standards agency which sees its task as being the consumer's champion. No more cover-ups."

He said that at present responsibility for food safety was scattered through 43 different quangos in three ministries. "The consumer always comes second. That cannot be allowed to continue."

In the meantime, sniping continued between government departments over the handling of the unpublished report on hygiene in the meat industry. Although John Major said it was "ludicrous" to suggest that Michael Forsyth,

the Scottish Secretary, was enraged by the Agriculture Ministry's decision not to pass on the report, the two departments continued to make clear that each believed the other to be in the wrong.

Last night it was disclosed that six people have been infected by the *E. coli* bacterium after eating at a hotel in Lincoln. Two women, one of them elderly, were said to be "poorly" in hospital.

Despite the present difficulties, however, it seems clear that the Agriculture Ministry will survive after the election. Senior civil servants argue that Britain needs a separate Ministry to ensure that it keeps its clout in Europe.

## Judge blames EU ban on caning for juvenile crimes

By JOANNA BAILE

A JUDGE condemned European Union laws against corporal punishment and the rise in single-parent families as he sent two young arsonists to a secure unit yesterday.

Sentencing the boys, aged ten and 13, to two and a half years, Judge Rodwell QC said in Luton Crown Court that the abolition of corporal punishment in schools had left teachers unable to discipline unruly youngsters, leading to an increase in delinquency.

The boys, who cannot be named for legal reasons, set fire to a neighbour's house as they roamed the streets of a council estate after being expelled from school.

Judge Rodwell said: "With the best intention in the world corporal punishment has been abolished and indeed that is a requirement of the EU."

"But this has resulted in an extremely unsatisfactory situation. Nobody wants children to be flogged but it is no longer possible for a teacher to deal with even a minor incident by a cuff round the ear or a smack on the hand, which is swift and something the child entirely understands and stops minor incidents escalating."

"If the child does not respond to being told not to bring gin into school or beat his mates up the teacher has to go through discipline proce-

dures. If the correct procedures are followed a great deal of verbiage comes out which may satisfy the intelligent niceties of educationists but has no impact on a great number of children. Suspension is hardly a sanction."

The judge expressed concern over single-parent families, and said that children needed two parents. The boys had both come from broken homes. He said: "Both children come from homes where a father for a lot of the time was not present. It is often said that in single-parent homes children can be given as much love as they need but that is not the entire answer."

During their trial last month the court was told that the two boys were among a gang of children who harassed the Smith family on the Downside estate, Dunstable, Bedfordshire.

One day, the boys put paper through the letter box and tried to set light to it, but failed. Then a woman neighbour, described by the judge as "the neighbour from hell", lent them a lighter so they kicked the door in and started a fire on a hall table.

The blaze left the house uninhabitable, causing £4,000 damage to the building and destroying virtually everything the family owned. The boys denied arson.



Tony Blair plays football with Inverness young people yesterday before the Labour meeting

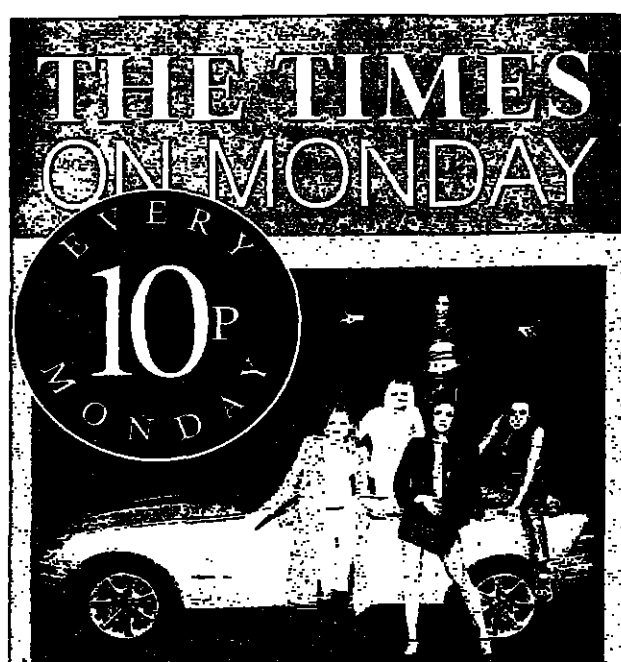
**WEATHER** ..... 24  
**CROSSWORD** ..... 24  
**COURT & SOCIAL** ..... 22

**LETTERS** ..... 21, 38  
**OBITUARIES** ..... 23  
**SIMON JENKINS** ..... 20

**BUSINESS** ..... 25-28, 39, 41  
**WEEKEND MONEY** 29-38, 40  
**SPORT** ..... 42-48

**GARDENING: WEEKEND** 4, 5  
**PROPERTY: WEEKEND** ..... 7, 8  
**TRAVEL: WEEKEND** ..... 15-23

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# Blair rallies Scottish party for battle ahead

By JILL SHERMAN

TONY BLAIR yesterday urged critics of his "new Labour" project to trust him to transform the country as he had his own party.

The Labour leader warned his party against complacency, after an opinion poll yesterday showed Labour with a 26 point lead over the Tories. "We are doing well but we take nothing for granted," he told the Scottish Labour Party Conference in Inverness.

Mr Blair argued that Labour could make huge changes in government even within tight spending constraints. "There is nothing that makes me more angry than when people say there's no difference between the parties," he said. Labour would use the same pot of money, but spend it differently — on improving health and education services and on law and order. "The public sector spends £320 billion a year. Don't let anyone tell me we can't spend that money differently."

Scottish party activists are unhappy with Gordon Brown's announcement that, as Chancellor, he would not raise income tax rates and that he would stick to Kenneth Clarke's current overall expenditure figures. The Campaign for Socialism has put out a leaflet accusing Mr Blair of suppressing dissent.

Last night old Labour activists were voted off the party's Scottish executive and replaced by Blairite candidates, giving Mr Blair for the first time a majority of supporters on the committee.

Using probably his last big speech before the general election campaign, Mr Blair said: "We run for office as new Labour. We govern as new Labour. No going back to the past. Not old left or new right but a new centre and centre-left agenda for Britain."

Directing his message to the electorate as well as delegates in the hall, Mr Blair spelt out the central differences between the two parties. He reassured activists that he would campaign for two "yes" votes in the referendum on whether a Scottish parliament, with tax-varying powers, should be established.

"Have faith in new Labour and Britain will have faith in us," he said.



Mary Blair, left, who fostered Tony Blair's father Leo, on the campaign trail

## Socialist birthright was fostered in tenements

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

TONY BLAIR'S working-class roots in the slum tenements of 1920s Glasgow were given a new spin yesterday with claims that Mary Blair, his foster grandmother, was a firebrand socialist.

In a move neatly timed to coincide with the start of the Scottish Labour Party Conference in Inverness, Mr Blair's office released sepia photographs of the matriarch standing on a campaign lorry with the slogan: "Peace and Socialism is Our Aim."

Mary Blair and her husband, James, a Clydeside ship rigger who was seldom well enough to work, lived in the upstairs section of a privately let sandstone tenement. Their home consisted of a kitchen and one other room. They had to share their lavatory, which was downstairs, with 11 other people.

In 1925 the Blairs fostered the illegitimate baby boy of Celia Ridgway and Charles Parsons, travelling entertainers. The child was Leo Blair, the Labour leader's father.

In later life Leo Blair had ambitions to stand as a Conservative candidate, but during the 1930s Depression he was a secretary in the Young Communist League.

He left school at 17 and worked for the *Daily Worker* newspaper, but when the Second World War started, it was closed down. He then

went to work as a clerk for Glasgow Corporation, during which time he married Hazel McLeay, the daughter of a Glasgow butcher. He joined the Army in 1942, emerged as a major, gained a legal qualification and became a barrister.

In 1969 the local authority began a plan of slum clearance. Tony Blair's grandmother moved into one of the new high-rise blocks. Mr Blair said yesterday that he remembered the move was a "great thing" for her.

He said: "That hope and progress has changed for a great number of people in inner cities and that is what we have to tackle."

## Cheddar men

Continued from page 1  
than nuclear DNA. Dr Bryan Sykes, from Oxford, said: "It is extraordinary that the DNA survives at all, but we were able to extract it and sequence it. The Cheddar Caves are an excellent place for preservation as the limestone helps keep the minerals in the bone and the DNA intact."

"It is not a perfect match. One base pair — that is, one letter of the genetic alphabet — is different out of 300. But in 9,000 years we would expect one to change by the normal rates of mutation. So it's a pretty close match."

The odds against finding a match are not enormous. The institute carried out only 20 tests, finding a single close match. But given a larger sample, they would probably have found many more. If much of today's large population is descended from the relatively few hunter-gatherers who lived 9,000 years ago,

the mitochondrial DNA of a few Earth-mothers will now be shared by many descendants.

Dr Sykes believes it is further evidence that the population of Britain is descended from hunter-gatherers and not from a later group of farmers who migrated to the country. His belief, backed by a much larger study of many different European populations, is that the hunter-gatherers learnt farming from the incoming group, but were not physically displaced by them.

A colleague of Dr Sykes, Dr Robert Hedges, said: "Analysing the bones takes months, as the tests must be run many times to see a reliable pattern. By contrast, analysing the DNA samples from cheek swabs can be done in a few hours."

Mr Targent's wife Catherine, 47, said: "Maybe it explains why he likes his steaks rare."

## Major to announce nursing care scheme

John Major last night ended a week overshadowed by the row over food safety, worsening poll figures and embarrassing remarks by David Evans, MP, by promising to unveil new policies to distance his party from Labour.

Plans to extend private pension provision would be followed by further "original and exciting ideas", he said. Those ideas will include the unveiling on Monday of plans to introduce an insurance scheme to help the elderly pay for nursing care without having to sell their homes. For every £1 of insurance cover, £1.50 worth of assets would be untouched if nursing care was needed. At present, anyone with assets of more than £16,000 must meet the full cost of fees.

## Unlawful killing verdict

An inquest jury in Retford, Nottinghamshire, returned a verdict of unlawful killing yesterday on a seriously ill pensioner who was given a lethal dose of a substance used in America to execute prisoners on death row. Karen Bowler, a nurse at Bassetlaw District Hospital in Worksop, gave potassium intravenously to Philip Gregory, 71, instead of orally. She said she believed she had "made a mistake".

## Picasso hospital clue

Police investigating the theft of a £700,000 Picasso painting from a London art gallery have made checks on a psychiatric hospital close to where the suspected thief was last seen. The man, who had a sawn-off shotgun, made his getaway from the Lefevre gallery in Mayfair in a taxi after ordering the driver to take him to Wimbledon, southwest London, where he asked to be dropped off near a psychiatric hospital.

## Author's stepson jailed

The stepson of the late Alistair Maclean was jailed for two-and-a-half years yesterday for a £1.5 million computer fraud. Arthur Curtis Maclean, 40, whose mother married the thriller writer when Arthur was a child, was described at the Old Bailey as a reckless spendthrift who bounced cheques "left, right and centre". He swindled thousands of computer users and companies.

## Campaign wife widowed

A mother who has fought for 10 years to have the case into her son's death reopened discovered her husband's body in the bath at their home in Blackpool. Fred Varma, 54, had multiple knife wounds, but police have ruled out foul play. A motorcyclist was cleared of reckless driving after Dr and Linda Varma's son Christopher, seven, was killed in a road accident in 1987.

## High jumper sent down

Stanley Osuide, Britain's fifth-ranked high jumper, was jailed for six months after he admitted smuggling a Nigerian relative through the Channel Tunnel. He should have been competing yesterday in the World Indoor Championship athletics in Paris, Maidstone Crown Court was told. Osuide has spent nearly the equivalent of the sentence in custody on remand, so he will probably be released soon.

## 'Boss' honours Ingham

Baroness Thatcher yesterday conferred an honorary degree on Sir Bernard Ingham, her press secretary for 11 years, at the University of Buckingham, where she is chancellor. She praised Sir Bernard as a man of integrity, saying: "The greatest thing about holding great office is that you can choose people of ability because they understand what service to a free country means and they serve you loyally."

## Rail firms 'cut services'

Privatised train companies have made dozens of illegal cuts in services since taking over BR franchises, a rail lobby group says. Studies by the Railway Development Society of the timetables run by South West Trains and Connex South Central were said to show 75 breaches of agreed service levels. The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising said the firms had promised to put right any breaches.

## Erotic first night

An erotic French film banned in Britain since the 1970s for its sadomasochistic content is to receive its first screening in this country even though it does not have the approval of British censors. *Histoire d'O*, about a woman who is sexually abused by masked men, will be shown at the Institut Français in London on April 26 as part of a festival entitled "66 Years of Eroticism in French Cinema." Rumpy-pumpy war, page 19

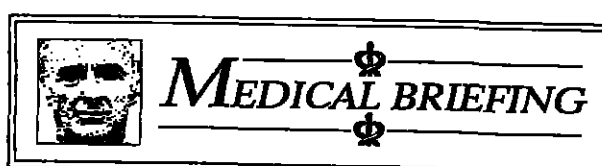
## Rock-a-bye layby

Bedfordshire County Council has agreed to build a temporary layby outside the house of Julie Marshall, 31, so that she can give birth at home next month. When major work began in her street at Kempston, officials at Bedford Hospital said they could not go ahead if there was no space for an ambulance and a midwife's car outside her front door. The layby will be removed after the birth.

## Doctors must put patients before feelings and submit to HIV tests

SOME 50,000 women who have had gynaecological or obstetric care in four health areas would be less than human if they were not worried by the news that a junior doctor who cared for them was HIV positive. Now 1,700 letters are being sent to those patients whose surgery may have put them at risk from the doctor, whose identity and sex have not been revealed. Fortunately, the risk, so far as is known, is not great. It seems that there have been only two suspected incidents of health workers passing HIV to patients: one concerning a French surgeon and the other, more doubtfully, a Florida dentist. However, the medical establishment and the politicians who have been only too ready to accept its reassurances have been made on more than one occasion in the past 20 years to look foolish and their foolishness has cost lives.

Originally, for example, medical experts assured the public that there was no evidence that HIV could be spread other than by semen,



Dr Thomas Stuttford

no evidence that blood could carry the infection, and none that women could catch or transmit it. This statement was answering the wrong question.

The public had wanted to know whether there was evidence that blood and other fluids could transmit the disease. Although there was not, they were falsely reassured. As a result of the doctors' intransigence, maintained despite the forebodings and doubts of many colleagues, hundreds of young haemophiliacs were given blood transfusions and died.

Likewise the reassurance by experts that there was no evidence that BSE could be transmitted from one species to another was ridiculed by

many as meaningless and probably inaccurate, but despite this the experts continued with their bland, reassuring phrases and the politicians continued to believe them until they, and everyone else, had proof that BSE was crossing species' barriers.

Hepatitis B, which like HIV is spread by blood, semen and other body fluids, has been spread by doctors and other health workers and there have been several disastrous outbreaks with considerable loss of life. There are many occasions, possibly the majority, when surgeons find after a long operation that the sweat within their gloves is bloodstained as a result of pricks and tears in the gloves.

The same needle prick which allowed a patient's blood to get into a glove might just as well have caused the surgeon to bleed and to allow his or her blood to escape into the patient's wound.

Doctors are compulsorily tested for hepatitis B, why is there such reluctance to do the same for HIV? It seems that there is a fear that it would produce accusations of sexual and racial prejudice, as HIV is still much more common in British homosexuals than heterosexuals, and in those doctors and nurses who have grown up in Africa and the Far East rather than, for example, in York or Truro.

Nobody wants to offend colleagues, and doctors as a group are particularly free of sexual and racial prejudice. But their first duty must be for their patients' health and lives rather than fellow doctors' feelings. The next precaution needed to safeguard the nation's health is to expose the phrase "There is no evidence that this or that can cause trouble" for the feeble reassurance that it is.

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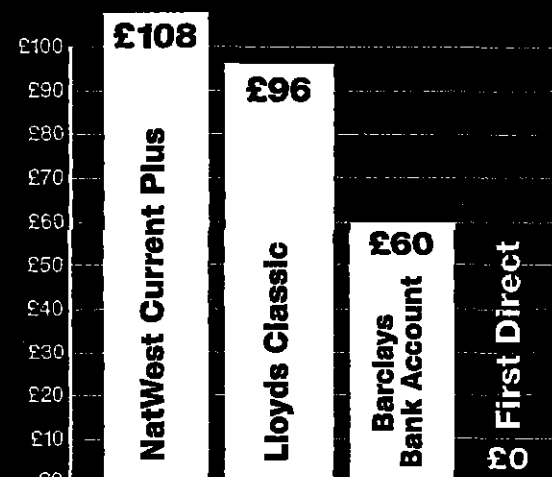
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Teenagers raped and molested during 20-year reign of terror at schools and homes

# Paedophile social worker jailed for 18 years

REPORTS BY BRIAN FARMER AND MARK THOMAS

A PAEDOPHILE who repeatedly abused children in his care throughout a 20-year career as a teacher and headmaster at special schools and homes was jailed for 18 years yesterday.

Keith Laverack, 52, molested and raped teenage boys and girls at three establishments in Cheshire and Cambridgeshire, ensuring their silence with a combination of threats and "sweet talk". Judge Huw Daniel told him: "You took advantage of damaged children to satisfy what can only be described as your perverted lusts when you knew that what they wanted was love, affection and security."

Laverack, who rose to become a senior social services manager, denied the 20

specimen charges against him. But the jury found him guilty on 11 counts of buggery and four of indecent assault after almost nine hours of deliberation at Chester Crown Court. He stood with his head bowed in the dock, occasionally closing his eyes as the judge passed sentence. Many of Laverack's victims were in court and they broke into applause as he was led away.

The judge said that Laverack subverted many of his victims by force and violence, leaving them humiliated and oppressed. "They had to live with it for years, locking it away, trying not to think of the appalling things you did to them. You made them go through the ordeal of

having to recall what happened to them and suffer what many of them regard as public humiliation. You were merciless to them at the time and you showed no mercy when you were found out."

Judge Daniel went on: "You assaulted them at every opportunity that presented itself. You were confident you could get away with it because the system allowed you to get away with it, and you ensured the silence of these children by threats and sweet talk, confident in the knowledge that if these children did complain they would not be believed."

Laverack's career as a paedophile

began as soon as he joined the staff of Greystone Heath, an approved school in Warrington, and continued until 1987, the judge said. "Outwardly you were caring and responsible, but you lived a lie. You used your knowledge of children and high intelligence to abuse and deceive. I cannot remember a case as bad as this. That your urges got the better of you I regard as no excuse at all. You knew what you were but you took no steps to have treatment. You wanted to abuse children and you continued to do so over those 20 years or more."

Laverack was convicted of eight out of

nine charges of buggery at Greystone Heath School; one charge of buggery at Kneeworth House, a children's home near Meldreth, Cambridgeshire; two out of three charges of indecent assault at Kneeworth House; two out of three charges of buggery while head of Midfield children's home near Cambridge; and two out of three charges of indecent assault at Midfield. He was cleared of indecently assaulting a boy he played against in a golf tournament at Ely, Cambridgeshire.

One of his victims said after the trial: "What the judge said about the gravity of the offences and how wicked they were was pretty much on the ball, and how we

all felt - I couldn't put it better. The sentence wasn't lenient but you always hope for more because a paedophile can't be cured and he could be out in nine or ten years and doing it again somewhere else."

Ted Unsworth, director of social services for Cambridgeshire, said: "I regret that anybody has suffered harm as a result of being in care in Cambridgeshire. These offences were committed many years ago when standards were not so high." He also regretted that Laverack had risen so high within the social services department but said there was no way that anyone could have known the truth. "It just shows how clever he was at concealing these activities."

## Investigators found network of child abuse

TWELVE paedophiles who preyed on hundreds of vulnerable youths in children's homes across two counties were exposed by one of the biggest ever investigations into child sex abuse yet mounted. Eleven have been given lengthy prison sentences, but the full extent of their network can be revealed for the first time today.

Orders restricting the media from reporting details of several of the cases for fear of prejudicing later trials were finally lifted by a Chester Crown Court judge today as Laverack was jailed.

Police and social workers in Cheshire and Merseyside co-operated to investigate the allegations from former residents of children's homes. They are convinced that similar patterns of widespread abuse by paedophiles who wormed their way into positions of authority at children's homes in the 60s and 70s will emerge from other investigations around the country.

The police inquiry began in Cheshire in August 1993, after complaints were received about Brian Hudson, a residential social worker at Danesford Children's Home, run by NCH Action for Children in Congleton. Officers launched Operation Bugle, which eventually gathered information against 39 former Danesford staff from 1965 to the school's closure in 1991.

Hudson, now 47, was found guilty of four indecent assaults and jailed for four years. Dennis Grain, 64, was jailed for seven years after admitting 19 offences at Danesford, Greystone Heath Approved School in Warrington and Axetolme House in Doncaster.

Grain began his child care work as a residential officer at Ashbourne Lodge, Winchester. He was a housemaster at Danesford in from 1964. He was a housemaster at Greystone Heath from 1971 to 1980 when he went to Doncaster as warden at Axetolme House. He was asked to leave

### THE INQUIRY

A SOLICITOR representing child abuse victims has called for a public inquiry into the scandal in children's homes in northwest England. Peter Garsden said he would be making an appeal to Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary. "We want to know exactly how this could be allowed to happen on such a scale," Mr Garsden estimates there could be hundreds of claims for compensation from victims of convicted child abusers as a result of the police inquiries in the North West and Cambridgeshire. The solicitor, of Abney Garsden McDonald of Poynton, Cheshire, has already prepared the ground for civil actions in the North West.

In 1982 for inappropriate behaviour, but from 1983 to 1984 he was warden at Eton College, Windsor.

John Clarke, 37, was another residential social worker at Danesford from 1984 to 1989, when he took a similar job at Redhouse Crescent in Longton, Stoke. He was found guilty of one indecent assault and pleaded guilty to three more, and was also found guilty of one physical assault by Chester Crown Court last year. He is serving 3½ years.

The common link between the investigations in Cheshire and Merseyside was Alan Langshaw, 44, now serving 10 years after admitting 28 sex assaults when he appeared at Warrington Crown Court on November 25, 1994. Langshaw, of Wirral, became a house-parent at Liverpool City Council-run Greystone Heath in 1970, and returned there in 1976 after a two-year break. In 1980 he moved to St Vincent's Community School in Formby, Merseyside, as deputy head, and was promoted to headmaster but suspended

in 1986. He then worked for Catholic Social Services in Liverpool and the Hydrocephalus Association before joining Halton College, Widnes in 1989 as a counsellor for sexually abused students. He worked there until his arrest on March 7, 1994.

Langshaw's abuse of the disturbed young people who came under his control went undetected for 20 years, until a chance sighting by one of his former victims.

The man saw Langshaw leading a young boy into a St Helens library, his arm protectively wrapped around his shoulder. He went to the police, determined that no more children should have to face what he had endured.

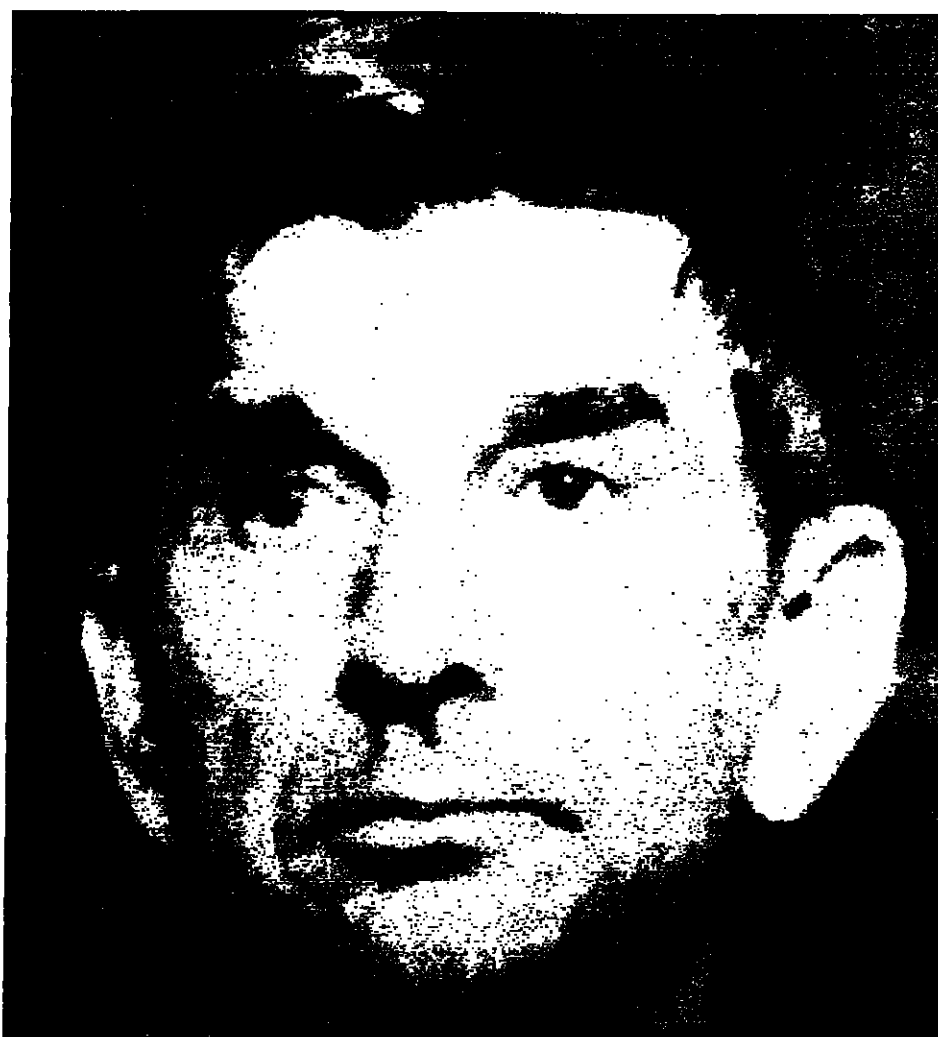
Cheshire police launched Operation Granite in February 1994, concentrating on Greystone Heath, while Merseyside Police set up Operation Van Gogh, initially to investigate Langshaw's activities at St Vincent's.

Operation Granite led to allegations against a total of 33 former Greystone Heath staff who worked there from 1965 until it closed in 1985. Four of the 33, including Langshaw, Laverack, and Grain have been prosecuted and sentenced, while three died before police got involved.

Roy Shuttleworth, 64, of Leigh, Greater Manchester, was found guilty of 11 sex offences at Greystone Heath and Warrington Children's Home in Liverpool by Chester Crown Court on May 30 last year and jailed for 10 years.

Another major element of the Cheshire inquiry was Operation Emily, which centred on St Aidan's Approved School, Widnes, run by the Nugent Care Society. This operation began with a complaint against headmaster Terence Hoskin in December, 1992.

Allegations about 25 staff were received, covering the years 1970 to 1981, when it closed. Hoskin, 59, of Doncaster, was jailed for eight years for nine sex offences and 13



Laverack was said to have impressed boys with his elegance and distinction

## Captain Hook figure had Lost Boys in thrall

THE PAEDOPHILE

KEITH LAVERACK had risen to a position of great responsibility within Cambridgeshire's social services department before police discovered that he had abused children in his care for the best part of 30 years. He had become manager of the council's guardian ad litem panel by the time he was arrested in February last year.

Guardians ad litem are independent people appointed by a court to act for children taken into care by social workers and to prepare reports on their futures. Laverack's responsibilities included recruitment and he would almost certainly have had access to the personal details of many children in care.

He began his career as a science teacher at the Greystone Heath approved school in Warrington, Cheshire. He moved to Cambridgeshire in 1970, worked in two children's homes and the planning and procedure department of the county's social services before,

in 1992, being appointed manager of the guardian ad litem panel. He was well known and well connected.

In court, Alex Carlile, QC, for the prosecution, depicted Laverack as a tall, dashing figure who wore smart clothes, drove sports cars and played golf. Laverack impressed boys with his elegance and distinction, and Mr Carlile compared him to Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*. "The boys for whom Mr Laverack had responsibility were very much the Lost Boys. Some of them had been rejected by their mothers and fathers. Not a few had been sexually abused at home by their fathers, by their stepfathers, by the uncles and friends."

Mr Carlile read a description of Captain Hook from *Peter Pan*: "He is never more sinister than when he is at his most polite, and the elegance of his demeanour, show him as one of a difference class from his crew."



Greystone Heath approved school was at the centre of a web of paedophilia

## 'I don't think I can ever come to terms with what he did to me'

ONE of Keith Laverack's victims spoke yesterday of how, nearly 25 years after the abuse ended, he remained psychologically scarred. The man, now 39 and married, with a daughter, was abused by Laverack between the ages of 14 and 16, while in a children's home.

The victim, who gave evidence against Laverack at Chester Crown Court, said he would never recover from the damage he had done. "I don't think I can ever come to terms with it. It doesn't go away - you suppress it."

He added: "Some people may say by coming here to give evidence you may lay the ghost to rest. But it doesn't. What you are looking for is justice for someone to pay for the crimes they have perpetrated on others."

The man, who cannot be

### THE VICTIMS

identified for legal reasons, said that Laverack's abuse had left him wary of men. "I am still uncomfortable to this day in male company," he explained. "I will not sit next to another man on a couch. I will not stand next to another man in a toilet."

He added: "I don't have male friends. Female friends, yes. But I don't trust anybody."

The man recalled his confusion and fear during the time he was being abused. He said there was no one he could tell, although he felt guilty for not having spoken out.

"You know it's wrong but where do you go? You want to tell somebody. The voice cries out to do something. But you

do you tell? ... I deeply regret that I didn't tell somebody when I was 14 or 16. Maybe it would have saved the boys who came after me."

He said that he had never disclosed the full extent of his suffering at the hands of Laverack - not even to his wife. And he said he was left with a feeling of worthlessness.

"If it were not for my family, my wife, my daughter, I would question what the point was and just call it a day," he added. "If I was on my own I would say, probably with a smile on my face: thank you, you can keep life."

The man said he had left the home where Laverack worked at 16 and "disappeared abroad". He had then drifted

in and out of work before becoming a self-taught computer programmer. He had never caught up educationally.

He said that he still feared for children in care, believing that there were not sufficient checks to protect them from sexual abuse. "There are kids who are currently now in care who are being systematically abused," he said. "They are still going to be out there. Nothing is going to change."

He called for potential recruits to children's homes to be screened much more critically and thoroughly. Outside teams should visit homes unannounced and regularly to talk to children individually and gain their trust.

He did not want to talk about Laverack, but he said he hoped his former teacher "died in prison".



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# Judge criticises council for misuse of taxpayers' money' by pursuing case Lord of Manor right to charge for access

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

RESIDENTS of homes built on an ancient common must pay the Lord of the Manor whatever he asks to drive across his land to reach their front doors, the High Court decided yesterday.

The ruling means up to 150 families living on Bucklebury Common, near Newbury in Berkshire, will have to pay Robin Hartley Russell, 36, whose family has owned 820 acres of the land for at least 450 years. Although the house-holders own their properties, they will be breaking the law if they do not buy the right to cross the common to reach their homes.

Mr Hartley Russell has charged between £5,000 and £50,000 to the 50 or so families who have already agreed to pay him for access rights. Newbury council took Mr

Hartley Russell to court, saying its powers as managers of the common meant it could give residents permission to drive across the thin strip of land to their homes.

David Mole QC, for the council, argued that a management scheme signed in 1929 between the Hartley Russell family and the local authority of the day under the Commons Act meant that the council was responsible for granting or restricting vehicular access.

The judge agreed the council had the right to prosecute if vehicles trespassed on the common, but said this did not mean the authority could grant access.

He said the scheme signed by the council does not have the effect of removing all the landowner's rights to object to trespass on his land, which had been in the Hartley Russell family as Lords of Bucklebury Manor since 1540.

He could not see how the family did not retain the "fundamental" right to object to "trespassers" with cars on the land and to charge householders for using it.

The judge said this had always been a valuable right which had earned "substantial sums". Dismissing the council's case, he criticised the authority for using local taxpayers' money to fight an action which was not for the benefit of the community but to help "a few individual householders on the com-



Residents must pay to use the narrow strip of land between the gatepost, above, and the road. Mr Hartley Russell lives in Bucklebury Manor



Hartley Russell: land in family for 450 years

mon". The council was ordered to pay costs, which are expected to total £10,000. Mr Hartley Russell said after the ruling that 50 to 60 home owners had already paid for the right to cross the common land and he would now consider what further steps to take to enforce his ancestral rights on the other residents.

He said a large proportion of the money would be ploughed back into improvement of the common. All the trees growing there are his personal property and his responsibility to maintain. He

employs an estate office and a full time forester and estate manager and he said that if he had lost the case, he might well have had to make some staff redundant. "I am just delighted this matter has been settled and my rights as owner of this property have been upheld by the court," he said. "I'm sorry it has fallen on local council tax-payers to pick up the bill."

Malcolm Pointer, his solicitor, said: "Common land is not public land, it is private land over which the public have leisure rights."



## Neighbour denies VE-Day Nazi taunt

By PAUL WILKINSON

A MAN who denied taunting his German neighbour by calling him a Nazi, waving a Union flag and singing *Land of Hope and Glory* on VE-Day claimed yesterday that his own great-grandfather was German.

Magistrates in Leeds heard that there had been verbal warfare between Frederick Thorpe, an unemployed painter and decorator, and Siegfried Neumann who lived next door on a council estate in the Leeds district of Bramley.

David Taylor, prosecuting Mr Thorpe on charges of provocation to violence, and harassment, said the Englishman had called Mr Neumann "Nazi", "Hitler" and "Kraut". Mr Thorpe counter-claimed that Mr Neumann had called him an "English pig".

Mr Thorpe denied parading in his garden with the flag or singing. "I was in the pub until 9pm on VE-Day," he said. He claimed Mr Neumann, 52, had suggested he fry his children at a barbecue he threw in August 1995. The trial was adjourned until March 17.

### CORRECTION

The chairman of Enfield Southgate Conservative Association is Lionel Zetter, not John Boast (report, March 1). Mr Boast was expressing a personal view; the association made no comment.

## It's only rock and roll but politicians like it

By ALAN HAMILTON

NEVER mind what they say, listen to what they listen to. Would you vote for a politician who confessed to a liking for Meat Loaf — the singer, not the dish — or another who admitted once being into Dexy's Midnight Runners?

Three parliamentarians with a youth connection bare their soul — not to mention their rhythm and blues and Britpop — in the 1015 section of *The Times* today. The secret Meat Loaf addict is revealed as the outrageously youthful William Hague, Secretary of State for Wales and Tory spokesman on youth issues. At 35, Mr Hague appears to harbour the ambition to be the youngest Prime Minister since Pitt.

Asked what bands he likes, Mr Hague admits to a Meat Loaf addiction of some years' standing. "When I'm at home at the weekends I often stick *Bar Out Of Hell* on the CD

player." Extremist politicians always risk losing the middle-of-the-road vote, so Mr Hague quickly adds that the last live concert he attended was given by that rather classic act, Diana Ross.

Passion runs higher in the breast of Mo Mowlam, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary and chair of the Labour NEC youth committee. "The record I play most is *Walk On The Wild Side* by Lou Reed. I put it on when I'm feeling fed up and it makes me feel a lot better." But she astutely keeps a foot in more than one musical decade, having recently been to concerts by the mildly dated Pink Floyd and the exceedingly current Oasis.

The Liberal Democrat Matthew Taylor, at 24 the youngest MP in the current Parliament, plays the Lib Dem game of appealing to all manner of obscure interest groups, although he does say

that a politician or pop star has a different lifestyle from everyone else.

He plays Jamiroquai in the car, admits to liking Oasis even though it is uncool to say so, and used to be into the Clash, the Specials, Madness and Dexy's Midnight Runners. His concert going tends to the Celtic fringe, having recently included Sinéad O'Connor and Van Morrison.

Mr Taylor, despite his youth, is astute enough to have nothing to with bands barred with the Tory brush. "The Spice Girls are popular but I try to avoid them. If they are doing it to get in the newspapers, then it's uninteresting. A lot of bands have put politics into their music. I'm not sure you can say that about the Spice Girls." Avoiding the Spice Girls is becoming daily more difficult.

1015, page 8

## SPECIAL ADVANCE PREVIEWS TOMORROW

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## Machete case nurse 'deserves honour'

By PAUL WILKINSON

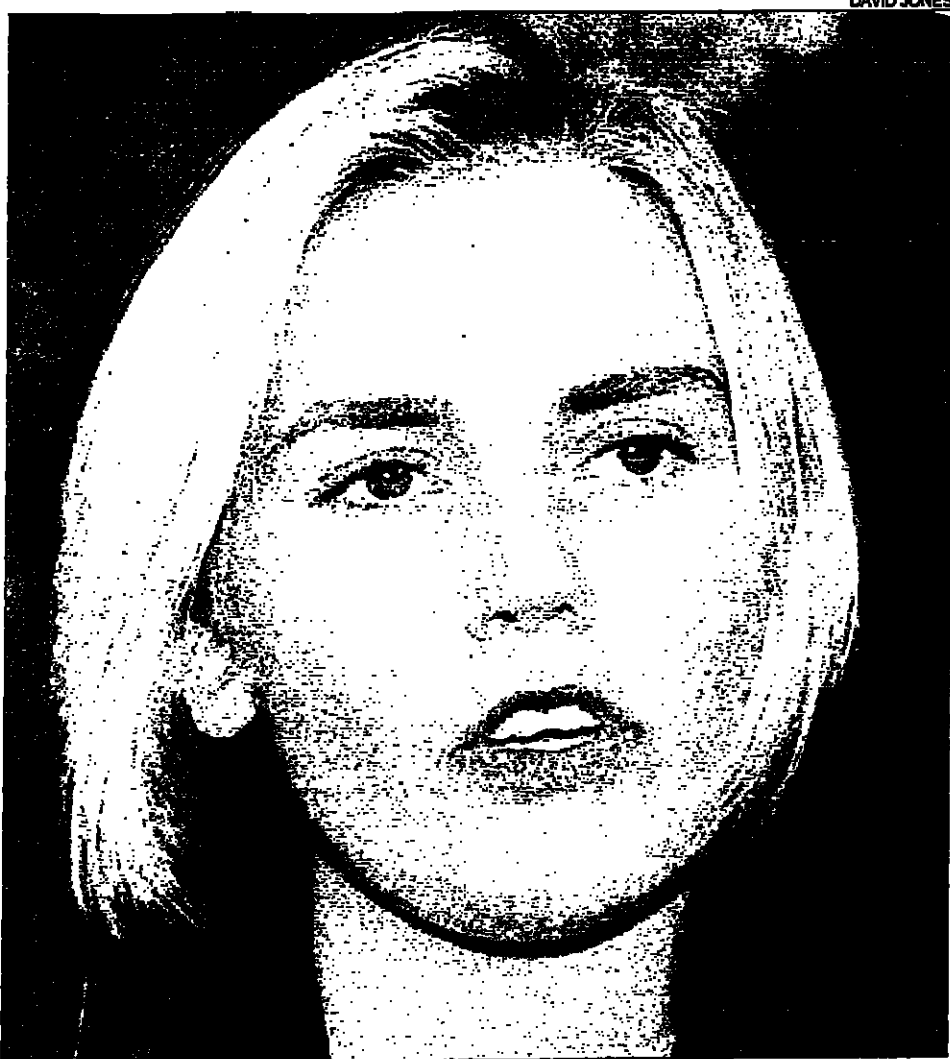
A JUDGE called yesterday for public recognition for Lisa Potts, the nursery nurse who risked her life to save children being attacked by a man wielding a machete.

Mr Justice Sedley, sitting at Teesside Crown Court, praised Miss Potts's courage and said: "It is now many months since the incident and it seems surprising that Miss Potts has not yet been sufficiently recognised for her bravery."

Miss Potts, 21, suffered a number of wounds as she tried to shield the children of St Luke's nursery in Blakenhall, Wolverhampton, during the unprovoked attack last July.

Horrett Campbell, 33, a schizophrenic, was convicted in December by Stafford Crown Court of attempted murder. Yesterday the judge committed him to psychiatric hospital while adjourning sentence for reports.

Miss Potts said: "I expected that he would go to a hospital. I think it is the best place for him so he can be treated."



Lisa Potts said that a psychiatric hospital was the best place for her attacker

## Lord Chancellor raised court fees unlawfully

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Lord Chancellor acted unlawfully when he imposed hefty court fees and denied poor people their ancient common law right of access to the courts, two judges ruled yesterday.

The High Court judges, Lord Justice Rose with Mr Justice Laws, ruled that Lord Mackay of Clashfern acted unlawfully by bringing in new fees with no reduction for financial hardship. The removal of powers to remit or waive fees was invalid.

An order bringing in higher fees and scrapping the exemptions was introduced in January by Lord Mackay and approved by the four senior judges and the Treasury. The effect of the order, Mr Justice Laws said, was "to bar absolutely many persons from seeking justice from the court" and there was no parliamentary authority for that.

Yesterday's ruling means that people on low incomes will again be able to apply for reductions in court fees and those who have paid the fees since January may be able to claim them back if they can

show hardship. The judges refused permission for the Lord Chancellor's lawyers to appeal.

Mr Justice Laws said: "The right to a fair trial, which of necessity imports the right of access to the court, is as near to an absolute right as any which I can envisage."

"Access to the courts is a constitutional right: it can only be denied by the Government if it persuades Parliament to pass legislation which specifically permits the executive to turn away people from the court door. That has not been done in this case."

Lord Justice Rose added there was nothing to suggest Parliament ever intended "a power for the Lord Chancellor to prescribe fees so as totally to preclude the poor from access to the courts".

The Lord Chancellor's Department said that it was considering the implications of the decision and whether they would apply directly for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal.

An Essex businessman, John Witham, who is on income support, had launched



Mackay: judges ruled he denied access to courts

the test challenge to the fees regime introduced under the Supreme Court Fees Order 1996 which scrapped the exemptions for those on income support. He wanted to sue an insurance firm for libel, but could not afford the new High Court writ fee of £500 which was raised from £120. Legal aid is not available in libel cases. Mr Witham did obtain legal aid for yesterday's challenge.

Mr Witham said after-

wards: "Thank God we are in this country and subject to a hearing in this country. I will now go ahead with my libel action."

Geoffrey Bindman, of Bindman & Partners, the solicitors who acted for Mr Witham, said: "The judges are saying that fundamental rights trump Parliament. They are saying that when the Government, through delegated legislation, tries to take away basic rights, they will intervene to prevent it."

Stephen Grosz, Mr Witham's lawyer, added that in refusing leave to appeal, the judges "have sent out a clear message that the Government should not pursue this through the courts."

The new fees were introduced to cover the entire £310 million annual cost of the civil justice system rather than the four-fifths of the expenditure met last year.

Although yesterday's ruling only applies to the part of order dealing with fees exemptions and reductions in the High Court, the Government will now face pressure, to ensure the provisions are restored in the county courts.

## Bingham pleads for simplified sentencing rules

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE Lord Chief Justice yesterday called on politicians to draw into one convenient statute the confusing strands of sentencing powers available to judges.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill expressed his sympathy with judges facing "extreme difficulty" keeping up with constantly changing maximum sentences as he heard an appeal in a case where a judge had handed down an unlawfully heavy term of imprisonment.

He told Arthur Street, 73, convicted at Chester Crown Court in September of indecent assault against a boy and two girls, that, partly because of the judge's error, he would serve three years in jail instead of five.

Lord Bingham was at Liverpool Crown Court for the first sitting of the Court of Appeal's Criminal Division outside London for almost 20 years. He wants to deliver justice as close as possible to its regional source. The appeal court may hold regular regional sittings, with Lord Bingham doing the travelling rather than the barristers, solicitors and families of appellants.

The concrete Queen Elizabeth II building which casts its

shadow over Liverpool docks has none of the majesty of the Court of Appeal's 19th-century home in the Strand, central London. In one morning session, Lord Bingham heard seven appeals arising from criminal cases in Greater Manchester.

They involved a professional burglar "with an appalling record", a man who went on the run rather than face trial, a young man who threatened to kill a police officer, a crack cocaine smuggler, a drug dealer and a heroin addict turned burglar. Four left the dock with sentences significantly reduced.

In all but one case, Lord Bingham, sitting alongside Mr Justice Ognall and Mr Justice Thayne Forbes, was able to dispense justice after a short huddle on the bench. They retired only once to consider the technicalities of the indecent assault case.

When they returned, Lord Bingham told the court that he understood the extreme difficulties facing judges in trying to keep up with complexities of modern statute law. "We would greatly welcome consolidation of sentencing powers in one convenient statute," Lord Bingham said.

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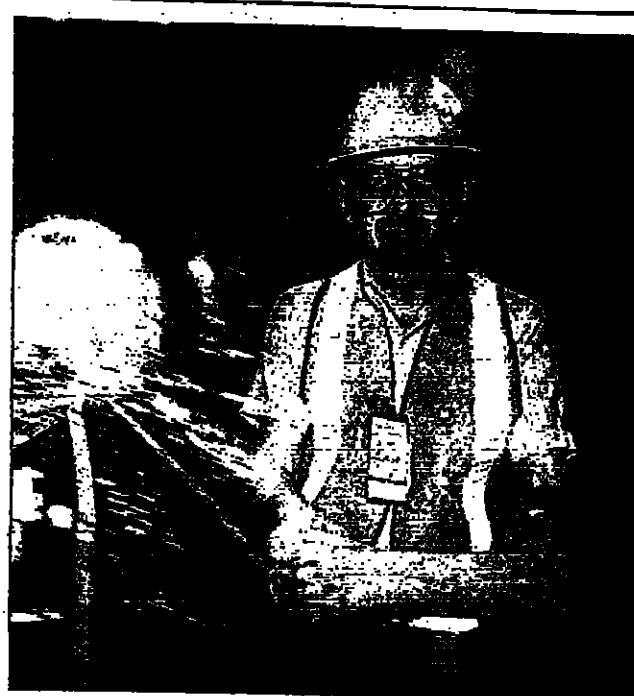
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Bruce Lander holds the bone of a bison that roamed the area up to 10,000 years ago. The skeleton shows they grew to seven feet high

## Jurassic past showing on Hollywood Boulevard

IN HOLLYWOOD, prehistoric usually means before the "talkies". But under the gaze of a billboard Jurassic Park dinosaur, scientists are turning up denizens of the past eight million years as they sift through construction site rubble.

In an area of Los Angeles dotted with trendy cafes and restaurants, they are finding the fossilised remains of tusked mastodons, horses,

camels and bison which roamed there until the end of the Ice Age 10,000 years ago.

The remains are now surfacing as Bruce Lander, a palaeontologist, and Robin Turner, an archaeologist, work in an 85ft deep trench that has been excavated for a new subway in Hollywood Boulevard. It is close to the Universal Studios' theme park that features animated dinosaurs.

Cranes and earth movers have hauled out tons of rock, revealing fossils from pollen to mammoth bones and lantern fish.

Until a million years ago, Los Angeles was under water. Then it evolved into a desert before adopting a cooler, wet climate. "Sometimes I catch myself saying, Oh my God, I'm the first person to hold this because this came from a time before there

were even people," Ms Turner said. Although they have already accumulated much material, she recalled watching helplessly as a 7ft tuna fossil disappeared up a conveyor belt and was crushed.

More happily, she recalled finding fossilised dolphin excrement containing complete fossils of the fish the dolphin had digested. "I was so excited I squealed," she said.

## Bronze Age cities may have been destroyed by comet

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

A SERIES of natural disasters which helped Bronze Age civilisations in many parts of the world may have been the result of comets or meteorites smashing into the Earth from outer space.

New evidence, to be discussed at a conference in Cambridge in July, is likely to give that idea greater academic respectability. The conference, organised by Dr Benny Peiser, a historian from Liverpool Moors University, will discuss whether extraterrestrial impacts can explain the destruction of cities and changes of climate that eliminated agriculture from large regions.

The most exciting new evidence comes from Dr Marie-Agnes Courty, a French expert in the microscopic study of soils and sediments. She is expected to report that samples from three regions of the Middle East, taken from levels corresponding to the period around 2,200 BC when there were abrupt climatic changes,

contain tiny spheres of a calcite material unknown on Earth but found in meteorites.

She has also found evidence of huge fires in a layer of burnt soil. The amount of black carbon in the layer is unlikely to come from local grassland fires, she says. It is more likely to come from enormous forest fires in other regions. Volcanic activity cannot explain the evidence, she says.

Dr Peiser says there is an abundance of evidence of violent change in many Bronze Age cultures at the same time. More than one event seems to have occurred, but at around 2,200 BC civilisations in Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley in India, and Egypt all appear to have collapsed.

Much later, at the end of the Bronze Age, around 1,200 BC, the Chang dynasty in China and the Mycenaean civilisation in Greece disappeared at the same time. The original evidence was gathered by the French archaeologist Claude

Schaeffer and published almost half a century ago.

He found that Bronze Age sites over a huge area of the near and Middle East showed evidence of four destructive episodes, the three most prominent being at 2,300 BC, 1,550 BC, and 1,200 BC. He concluded that the destruction of cities at more than 40 sites at the same times could only have been caused by massive earthquakes.

But earthquakes, even the biggest, have only local effects. Schaeffer's explanation is no longer accepted. The alternative, which the Cambridge conference will consider, is that during the Bronze Age the Earth was hit not once but several times by debris from space, most likely from a comet broken into pieces.

"We know that such impacts have happened in the distant past," Dr Peiser says. "The question is whether it could also have happened within human experience."

## Loaves are recalled over wire danger

By DAREH GREGORIAN

A BAKERY that supplies leading supermarkets is recalling up to a million loaves after some of the bread was found to be contaminated by pieces of wire.

Harvestime Bakeries of Leicester says that the products at risk are 800g white sliced loaves sold by Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway, Kwik Save and Choice, and the Harvestime 800g white sliced loaf.

Ian Toal, the company's sales and marketing head, said that customers had bought loaves containing pieces up to a centimetre long. "No one was hurt. The metal is clearly visible against the background of white bread."

"A week's output — about one million loaves — is involved, but we estimate only one in 20,000 could be affected. The product is no longer on sale, but we are concerned that customers could have stored loaves in the freezer."

The loaves would have been bought early this week, primarily in the Midlands. They have "best before" dates of February 27 and 28, and March 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the identification code HF.

Harvestime can be telephoned on 0116 246 0800.

## Pop stars boarded by Bulgarian CD pirates

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Spice Girls, Blur, Oasis and Take That have something other than pop music in common with Elton John and the Beatles: they are all victims of Bulgarian pirates.

Despite promises made at the beginning of December, when Bulgaria was accepted into the World Trade Organisation, five factories are continuing to flood international markets with counterfeit CDs.

Frances Moore, director of European affairs for the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, said yesterday: "The Bulgarians are completely undermining the industry. They are blatantly breaking their promises, robbing pop stars and composers of their royalties and record companies of their sales. They simply must be stopped, or the record industry will not have any future."

Ms Moore said of the five factories known still to be producing pirate CDs in Bulgaria: "We estimate conservatively that they are producing at least 15 million records a year."

The federation is demanding that Bulgaria be expelled from the World Trade Organisation unless it keeps the promises it made to get in.

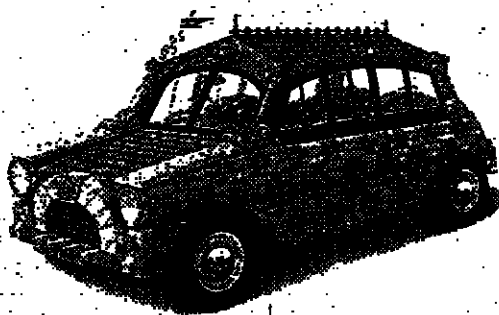
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# Countryside groups join forces against threat of Labour win

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

THREE countryside pressure groups are to merge in an attempt to create a powerful new organisation to fight Labour moves that may outlaw hunting and limit the rights of landowners.

The British Field Sports Society (BFSS) will amalgamate with the Countryside Movement (CM) and the Countryside Business Group (CBG). It is hoped the move will be agreed by the end of the month.

The Labour Party is committed to provide parliamentary time for a Private Member's Bill to ban fox and stag hunting and would also introduce a public "right to roam" over all uncultivated private land if elected.

The merger appears to be a takeover by the BFSS, founded in 1930, of the two newer groups, which were launched with much fanfare in 1995 but have failed to attract either the money or attention for which they hoped. The chairman of

the BFSS, Charles Goodson-Wickes, Tory MP for Wimbledon, and its chief executive, Robin Hanbury-Tenison, will hold the same positions in the new organisation, which will be at BFSS headquarters in London. The BFSS will also supply ten of 20 board members.

There is still no agreement on what the new body should be called. Countryside Campaign and British Countryside have been suggested, but a strong faction at the BFSS wants to retain the society's name and simply create a new countryside committee.

Sir David Steel, the executive chairman of the CM, who is to be a deputy chairman of the new organisation, said: "It is certainly true that the CM did not attract the substantial funds I had expected. There have been too many of us running round trying to get money from the same people."

Much of the funding for the CM was supposed to have

come from the CBG, which has so far raised less than £700,000 of the planned £5 million a year from businesses such as saddlers, gunmakers and fishing tackle companies.

Already there are signs, however, that the merger will sharpen as many divisions as it heals. Ken Ball, president of the National Federation of Anglers, who is on the board of the CM, said: "I will not be joining the new organisation. Our members are not in favour of a closer tie-up with BFSS, which would drag them into the hunting debate."

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), which refused a merger with the BFSS last year, will also be staying outside the new body. The National Farmers' Union, which is studiously neutral on hunting, is also distancing itself from the new body.

Leading article, page 21



Boat owners say that investment is needed to preserve their pastime and the businesses that depend on it after three years of dry weather

## Bottom drops out of canal market as drought bites

By NICK NUTTALL

BOAT OWNERS are demanding urgent action to counter the impact of three years of dry weather on canals and rivers and the consequent threat to livelihoods and hobbies.

The low level of waterways is causing craft to ground and propellers and hulls to be damaged, it was claimed yesterday. The problem is aggravated

by water being abstracted for domestic and agricultural use from rivers that feed canals. On the Severn, pleasure craft are hitting debris on the river-bed, the National Association of Boat Owners said.

Water shortages have led to lock restrictions on many canals, as British Waterways, which manages most of the network, has attempted to conserve resources. Restrictions on the use of

locks are to be introduced this month on stretches of the Grand Union and South Oxford canals.

Peter Lea, head of the association, said yesterday that there was a threat not only to the pastime of boating but to repair yards, public houses and other businesses that depended on leisure craft. He added that canals and navigable rivers were a haven for wildlife and enjoyed by birdwatchers, anglers,

walkers and riders. The boat owners' association, which has 2,000 members, held talks with senior executives at British Waterways earlier this week.

Mr Lea said that they wanted investment in the network. Funds were needed for pumping gear to prevent water running from canals into the rivers and the sea and to build new reservoirs or clean out silt and mud from existing ones to increase their capacity.

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Woodward: told mother

## Au pair gave dying baby 'kiss of life'

FROM QUENTIN LETTS  
IN BOSTON

LOUISE WOODWARD, the British au pair accused of murdering a nine-month-old American baby, tried to give the child the kiss of life after he became ill, according to her mother.

Susan Woodward said yesterday that her daughter had told her what went on during the evening last month she is alleged to have shaken the baby, who later died in hospital from a head injury. "I asked her to just look me in the eyes and tell me what happened that day," Mrs Woodward said on a Boston radio station. "She gave him the kiss of life. She knows that she did everything she could for him."

Miss Woodward, 19, of Elton, Cheshire, was formally charged with the first degree murder of Matthew Eappen, when she appeared in a Boston court yesterday. A post-mortem examination found that Matthew had suffered multiple injuries.

Miss Woodward, who arrived at the courthouse from a woman's prison, faces a sentence of life imprisonment if found guilty. Her mother said of her daughter: "She is looking forward to the case unfolding so that people will realise that she is completely innocent of anything, and that she had nothing to do with what happened to Matthew."

The baby's parents are both medical professionals from Newton, Massachusetts.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

## Burst of buyers for bubble cars

The biggest private collection of bubble cars — assembled over two decades by Bruce Weiner, a Canadian bubble gum magnate — has fetched £447,400 at auction. Christie's sold an example of the world's smallest production car, the 1964 Peel Trident, styled "the costliest touring car in the world", for £28,750. The top price, of £29,900, was paid for a 1960 Tg 500 Tiger Cabriolet.

## Train delays

Rail passengers heading for the West Country can expect lengthy delays after the main line to Devon and Cornwall was blocked by a derailment. Great Western Trains said westbound InterCity services would terminate at Exeter and eastbound trains at Plymouth.

## Carrier mission

An official expedition to try to solve the mystery of the carrier *Derbyshire*, which sank in a typhoon off Japan in 1980 with the loss of all 44 crew, begins today. Trade unions and shipping experts have argued that structural defects, not the weather, caused the disaster.

## Butlins fined

Butlins has been fined £25,000 after a monorail accident at its Somerset World holiday camp in Minehead last August. The firm pleaded guilty at West Somerset Magistrates' Court to failing to ensure the safety of employees and passengers.

## In the mire

A commuter who had been celebrating promotion spent the night in a marsh after falling asleep then leaving his train six stops too soon. The cold, dazed and mud-covered man, in his 30s, was found at dawn by John Myatt, a farmer at High Halstow, Kent.

## Beggars belief

A Gurkha recruit based at Crookham, Hampshire, sent into Guildford to improve his English by charming to shoppers, remarked in an essay that the people were so well off that "even the beggars wear pearls". He had been stopped by a flag-day collector.

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# Living life to the full should be for the greater good

Dom Antony Sutch

## Credo

Few men or women have been able to achieve a lifestyle that rings so true, and so captures the ingredients of human fulfillment, that it speaks to generation after generation. One such man was Pope St Gregory The Great, who was born in about 540. It is because of his way of life that he was chosen as patron of the monastery and school at Downside, where we follow the ancient tradition of celebrating his Feast on March 12, though the rest of the Catholic Church now keeps it in September.

In his early thirties, Gregory had high office as Urban Prefect in Rome, but found it difficult to balance the demands of secular work, the interests of his office, and the contemplative ideal. He retired to a monastic community. However, his talents were such that he was called from there into high office once more — this time in the Church. Wisely, when he left his monastery, he took with him some brethren, "so that moved by their example I might be held, as by the chain of an anchor, to the firm land of prayer, while buffeted with ceaseless

waves of worldly business". He undertook his duties reluctantly but fully. He had a grasp of detail, a keen eye for efficiency, and a profound concern for justice and welfare. He intervened personally to check unjust extortion, and refused to let the Church reap the profits of oppression. He dealt personally with all complaints. He was the first Pope to use the title "Servant of the Servants of God". This surely should describe the human destiny of us all.

Pope St Gregory The Great lived life to the full. He pursued his duties and his responsibilities, recognising that any talent he had was a gift that must be put to use for others. His own preference was subordinated to the greater good. Although living by an absolute creed and by the highest moral standards, and always conscious of ultimate truth, he nevertheless took the world for what it was, and attempted to make it always more wholesome and goodly.

The human person is one. It is impossible to separate the spiritual from the physical. What a person is must include what a



Father Antony Sutch at Downside Roman Catholic School, whose patron is Pope St Gregory The Great

person does. The fullness of a person must be formed by thought and meditation, and be characterised by a constant search for what is the truth. From this flow the actions of any person's life. A man's or woman's actions are not to be hidebound by theory, but must accord with a growing knowledge of what is right and what is good.

Too many today live superficially. Too many act from prejudice rather than principle. Too many fail to realise the importance, the

vital importance, of an inner knowledge and truth. To be flexible and to adapt one's ideas is necessary — as St Gregory's life reminds us — in a society that is pluralistic. Otherwise conflicts arise and evil will triumph in the chaos. Yet there still must be the ground-rock of absolutes. For St Gregory, that meant Christ and His teachings.

Cardinal Basil Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster, has given a picture of the human task by saying that a person should be in

the market place, but not necessarily of it. In this way the integrity of the individual is maintained, yet there is tolerance for another. There should always be openness, both of the inner self, the outer self. The spirituality of the human being is formed, yet constantly renewing. So with the human race as a whole it searches for the truth.

Ultimately, if the spirituality of a people is right, it will lead to the knowledge of the Creator of that people. I believe, argue and offer the Christian message, but not to the point of denying the integrity and rights of another. How much better if we search for the truth together with a pure heart and a pure mind, and encourage each other. In this way all of us will become servants of the servants of God.

The words of St Francis of Assisi, "It is in giving that we receive", are another way to sum up that title of St Gregory. He saw the fullness of humankind in prayer and action. So his Benedictine life speaks to us, through the centuries, echoing the words "to work is to pray" and, we must never forget, "to pray is to work".

Dom Antony Sutch is the Head Master of Downside School

At Your Service, Weekend, page 11



Pope St Gregory The Great: inspirational lifestyle

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## Sex is new religion of the West, vicar says

By RUTH GLEDHILL

SEX has taken over from religion as the new spirituality of society, according to an Anglican parish priest. The Rev Charles Pickstone writes in a book published this week: "The world of sex today is an outlet for natural instincts, a displacement of religious energies. Sex has become a path to an encounter with a primordial mystery."

In *For Fear of the Angels*, Mr Pickstone, vicar of St Laurence's in Catford, south-east London, says: "In the past, to escape from suffering, people worshipped God; but today sex is the drug most frequently used to give relief from the stress of living in a rapidly changing society." Sex, like religion, can transport the individual to a world of ecstasy and heightened experience. "Sex is the new spirituality."

Mr Pickstone, art critic for the current affairs review, *The Month*, says so many people are writing, talking and fantasising about sex because it has taken on many of the functions once performed by religion. "Sex has become the religion of the Western world, the bearer of most people's hopes of encountering something truly 'other'."

## Church exiles X-Files adverts

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE Church of England has dropped plans for an Easter advertising campaign based on the television science fiction series *The X-Files*, after copyright problems.

The Church had been planning a high-street billboard campaign featuring the show's catchphrase, "the truth is out there", as well as its distinctive X symbol. Posters would have been displayed outside churches, focusing on the Christian Cross with the message, "The Truth is Here".

However, the Churches' Advertising Network, which produced the Bad Hair Day posters last Christmas, was forced to cancel the proposed campaign after being unable to reach an agreement with Twentieth Century Fox, the programme's distributors.

Images associated with the series had been planned. The Rev Richard Thomas, for the network, said: "We had thought it was a strong but traditional campaign focusing on the Cross. We would have spoken to people in a language they understood. We know there is a huge communications gap between the Church's culture and that of people in secular society. We have to bridge that gap."

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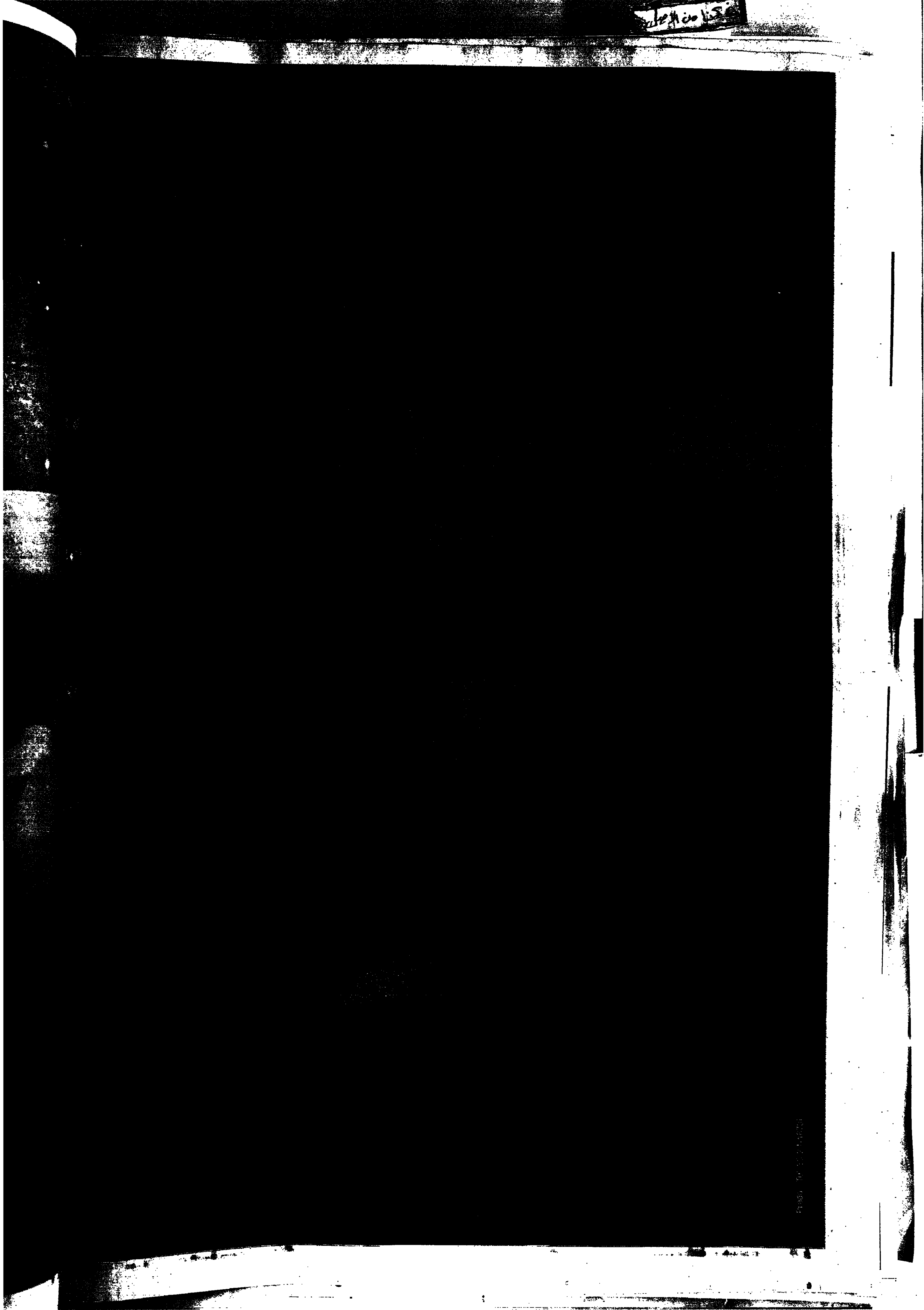


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Page 10 of 10



# Seaside carnival of 'happy fire' as rebel gunmen declare war on Berisha

SOUTHERN ALBANIA appears more in the grip of anarchy than rebellion. The trigger-happy remnants of President Berisha's army, confused and frightened, are without orders or aim; the diverse rebel groups are equally without command or structure. The hills echo to the sound of automatic gunfire while the roads are controlled by a host of different militias, each with contrary intentions.

Yet the rebels unit are in agreement on one issue. Without exception they reject Mr Berisha's offer of an amnesty in return for handing in captured weapons and are determined to fight unless he resigns. What happens in the next few days seems as certain to be



Anthony Loyd in Sarande watches a ragtag army of protesters, burning with hatred, turn economic discontent into a full-scale political revolution

confused as it is bloody. "Berisha is a tyrant of the worst kind," said a young fighter commanding an improvised checkpoint outside the rebel-held port of Sarande. "He is a liar and a traitor. None of us trusts his offers or his Chinese smile. There is no way we shall hand back our weapons. Unless Berisha resigns at once, the bloodshed shall begin. We shall accept

nothing other than the establishment of an interim government. If not — it's war."

A few miles away, on the torn road leading to the Greek border, a nervous unit of government soldiers searched civilians, travellers and the first groups of refugees heading south. There was a frantic haste in the way they tore open bags and rummaged through peo-

ple's belongings, and amid their swearing and shouts they kept turning to look at the hills behind them. The three ancient T55 tanks positioned round them seemed more a liability than an asset: rebels partly blew up the one bridge leading northwards, rendering it unusable to armour. "They are Berisha's terror," an Albanian whispered, "but their time is coming."

The promenade along the waterfront in Sarande was deserted, but for groups of rebels who were zeroing in their Kalashnikovs on empty bottles bobbing in the sea. Palm trees waved dreamily in the breeze behind them, while Corfu rose out of the sea mist beyond.

The secret police headquarters, an attractive stone building, was wrecked by fire and surrounded by a unit, bullet-riven government vehicles. The only traffic consisted of trucks of youths laden with grenades and Eastern bloc hardware speeding in all directions.

In the distance someone fired an artillery piece at nothing in particular. It was an almost surreal atmosphere, revolution in a seaside resort with the suggestion of only worse to come.

So far, other than the cacophony of gratuitous "happy fire" into the sky and isolated sniping incidents in nearby towns, the 49-hour ceasefire appears to be holding, but more through luck than intent.

At one point a group of rebels tore away in vehicles vowing to attack and capture nearby Corfu. The next minute the order was countermanded, although by who it was hard to tell, and more fighters raced after the initial group to bring them back. They returned en masse, glowering and muttering. "Tomorrow," one added sheepishly.

The fragmented nature of the forces opposing President Berisha suggests that it will be nearly impossible for a compromise deal to end the crisis without fighting. Each leaderless rebel group has its own agenda and is united only by hatred of the President.

"Many people are fearful of stepping into the spotlight as a leader in case this does not succeed," said Ilirjan Aliu, one of the members of the 11-man interim committee in Sarande. "Yet our choices are bleak. Either we succeed or we flee to Corfu. If we fail and remain, we shall die in the worst pogrom Albania has seen."

What began as economic discontent over the collapse of pyramid investment schemes has metamorphosed into something far more dangerous. Social discontent has catalysed with political unrest. Unless President Berisha resigns, a most unlikely event, Albania seems set to become the scene for Europe's newest war.

YANNIS BEHRANIS / REUTER

## Conflict threatens city rich in history

By NORMAN HAMMOND  
ARCHAEOLOGY  
CORRESPONDENT

THE deployment of tanks in Gjirokastra will alarm anybody with an interest in Albania's history and culture.

Designated as a "Museum City", the birthplace of Enver Hoxha is rich in domestic architecture of the Turkish period, especially of the 18th and 19th centuries. It also has an impressive medieval castle, founded by the Byzantines as Argirokastro some 500 years ago, the fortress fell to the Turks in 1418, and was garrisoned with 5,000 troops in the warlord Ali Pasha in 1812.

In spite of its humiliated history, many fortified merchant houses of Gjirokastra have survived in the Plaka, Hasmurat and market zones. The typical tower house has only a small doorway at ground level, with the windows and main rooms on the first and second floors.

The reception rooms, as in the Zekati House, seat of Ali Pasha's local governor, are often richly decorated with murals, carved wood and textiles, rare survivals of Albanian folk culture as it existed under Turkish occupation. The Zgenda House is an ethnographic museum, and its collection of folk art is endangered by the current unrest.

More alarming are the threats to the 18th century Xhamija e Pazarit mosque, and the two coeval churches of Shen Mehili and Shen Sotiri.



A boy holds a rifle decorated with flowers in a demonstration in Sarande yesterday

## Europe's peace pleas fall on deaf ears in Albania

FROM TOM WALKER IN TIRANA

EUROPEAN shuttle diplomacy with Tirana began in earnest yesterday with little immediate effect, while the offer from President Berisha of a two-day amnesty for the laying down of arms cut little ice with southern rebels.

The President talked to the European Union's Dutch presidency and the lighter-weight Council of Europe, but both organisations achieved little result. A clearer message reverberated from the heavily armed South. "He wants our guns, we want his head," chanted Tepelie rebels for the benefit of the television cameras.

"The situation is frozen," Rene van der Linden, the Dutch MEP who headed the council delegation, said. "The President does not seem to realise the international pressure that can be brought on Albania." Hans van Mierlo, the Dutch Foreign Minister, who headed the EU delega-

tion, refused to comment on what the President said, referring only to "a moral obligation" for change.

Opposition politicians were not surprised at the European failure, but agreed there was little chance arms would be handed in until the President gave in to domestic and international pressure. Unlike the rebels, they have not demanded President Berisha's resignation, but they want an interim technical government, elections and a thoroughgoing investigation into the collapsed pyramid schemes.

The longer the President stalls, the more suspicious Al-

banians become of his motives. Rumours abound in Tirana that paramilitaries are being recruited; even that the President is recalling army units from the South, stripping them of their uniforms and sending them back as a secret civilian force.

"He expects us to sign papers asking for peace while he rearms and tricks us," Blendi Gonxha, a spokesman for the Democratic Alliance, said. Mr Gonxha tried to leave on a Swiss Air flight this week, but he was arrested by secret police at the airport and held for 17 hours. He said "They watched me all the way. I felt

like Al Capone." He added: "I was advised to give up my passport."

Many in Tirana criticise the international press for referring to southern fighters as "rebels". They say that normally peaceful Albanians have had enough of a corrupt Government. But whatever the movement and whoever its leaders might be, yesterday it was still spreading.

It even looked possible that the Government's southern army base in Gjirokastra might fall. Contacted by telephone, a local teacher said women and children were on the streets with guns. As she spoke, shots could be heard in the background.

The nearby military base of Gerhot had been handed over to rebels, she said, and much of the population was armed. "You just say you're in danger and then you show your ID and they'll give you a gun," she said.

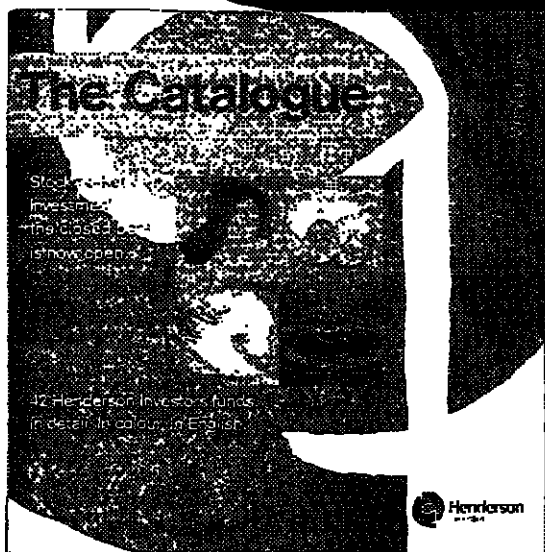
Photographs in the Italian press of the President's head of personal security with a Kalashnikov at his throat dramatically illustrated the evolving North-South divide in Albania. A fact-finding mission to the rebel-held town of Tepelene late on Thursday had gone disastrously wrong for Adem Hasu and a team of Berisha bodyguards when they were recognised at a checkpoint. The Ministry of the Interior said yesterday that their whereabouts are unknown.

## Refugees escape to Italy

Rome: Seventy Albanians, including babies, crossed to Italy yesterday in two boats but coastguards said reported sightings of two other refugee vessels turned out to be false alarms. The first

group crossed in a fishing boat from the Adriatic port of Vlora. A dinghy was found later and escorted to shore. Italy has vowed to repatriate all Albanians entering the country illegally.

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## Economy at risk if investors rethink

FROM JANET MCBRIDE  
IN TIRANA

ALBANIA risks lurching from political to economic crisis if it does not swiftly end the violence in the South of the country, economists said yesterday.

Western firms that had been tempted to pump money into developing over 170 miles of Adriatic coastline and recovering oil and metal deposits may reconsider after last weekend's insurrection.

An alarming drop in consumer spending that accompanied the rise and fall of fraudulent pyramid investment schemes is also threatening domestic enterprise.

Retail sales dropped by half at the end of last year as Albanians poured their meagre savings into the pyramids. When they crumbled in January, people scrambled to exchange leks for dollars, driving the domestic currency down by up to 50 per cent.

On Friday the lek was quoted at 134-137 to the dollar on Tirana's grey, open-air currency market, compared with 104 in early January.

"The country needs to get back to a normal business environment. There are major difficulties ahead and if they are not overcome soon, the costs will be higher," said Carlos Elbert, the World Bank's resident representative in Tirana.

"The destruction is in itself a big problem. In addition there is the question of how much damage there has been in terms of business that will not materialise."

Oil firms, including Occidental Petroleum Corp of the United States and Austria's OMV AG, have been drilling offshore. Some have also been eyeing onshore sites. Other foreign firms, mainly from Italy and Greece, have put money into producing textiles and shoes.

Analysts say events over the past two months will have done little to instil confidence abroad. But the country still has hope, because of its abundant natural resources. (Reuters)

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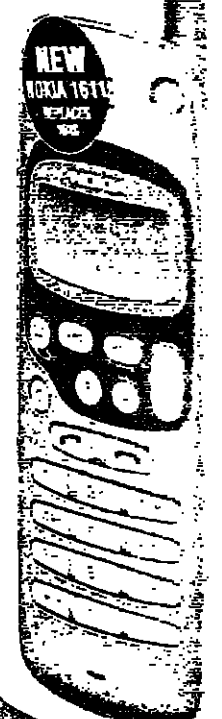
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## Aboriginal male artist unveiled as white woman

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

THE Australian art world swooned when they saw the work of "Aboriginal" painter Eddie Burrup, whose haunting canvases depicted Aboriginal "Dreamtime" legends.

The only trouble is, Eddie Burrup does not exist. He is a figment of the imagination of an 82-year-old white woman whose hoax has embarrassed the cognoscenti and infuriated the nation's indigenous artists. Not since Brisbane literary award winner, Helen Demidenko, admitted she fooled the publishing world in 1995 by assuming a false identity, have Australia's artistic elite been so humiliated.

The elderly painter who so successfully pulled the wool over everyone's eyes, is in fact Elizabeth Durack, a pastoralist, author and amateur anthropologist who lives in the

remote Kimberley region of Western Australia. Under Burrup's fictitious name, she produced a range of critically acclaimed work, including paintings, photographs and even an autobiography. Everyone assumed Burrup was a reclusive living a hermit's existence in the Outback.

"His" creations were so impressive that they even featured in a touring Aboriginal art show. This month some of the works were due to be entered for the highly respected Sulman Prize, to be announced on March 21. But after yesterday's revelation "Burrup's" work will almost certainly be withdrawn.

Durack, of Irish descent, is a member of one of the country's most famous pioneering families. She is a well-known painter in her own right and



Elizabeth Durack, a painter in her own right, has confessed to her deception, infuriating Australia's indigenous artists

confessed to her deception in an arts magazine, but refused to explain her motivation. "It's my last creative phase," was all she would say.

However, art historian Robert Smith, a close family friend, defended her actions. "She has created a character, just as a playwright or a poet

or a novelist will create a character," he said. "She hasn't appropriated any motifs or themes, or forms of Aboriginal art at all," he insisted.

Members of the Aboriginal art community were less forgiving, claiming she had stolen indigenous culture. "It's

the last thing left that you could possibly take away other than our lives or shoot us all," John Mundine, an Aboriginal art curator, said. Doreen Mellor, senior curator at Flinders Art Museum in Adelaide, said: "As an Aboriginal person I feel really offended."

Ironically, the Durack fam-

ily probably has a deeper knowledge of Aboriginal affairs than many other white settlers, having lived among Australia's indigenous people in Kimberley for nearly 180 years. In the last century the Duracks had a reputation as the only family of pastoralists who did not shoot Aborigines.

## Nation with a gift for deflating the complacent experts

FROM DAVID BENTLEY IN BRISBANE

AUSTRALIA has a history of hoaxes, literary and artistic. The most recent is the saga of the Brisbane writer, Helen Demidenko, whose book *The Hand that Signed the Paper*, carried off Australia's prestigious Miles Franklin literary award in 1995.

Demidenko passed herself off to the judges and to the public as the offspring of a Ukrainian peasant named Markov. In reality she was the bookworm daughter of a British-born couple, Harry and Grace Darville.

Controversy surrounding the book's perceived anti-Semitism reached fever pitch when her identity was disclosed. Publishers Allen and Unwin were forced to recall copies under the nom de plume — releasing the book under Helen Darville's byline.

The event recalled the famous episode of Ern Malley, an Australian poet whose work convinced Penguin editor Max Harris in 1944 that he had stumbled on a genius. Unfortunately Malley was a figment of the collective

imagination of poets James McAuley and Harold Stewart. To expose "the decay of meaning and craftsmanship in poetry", the pair compiled the *Malley Poems* by cutting and pasting lines at random from dictionaries, mixing them with a report on swamp drainage.

In the 1950s another literary hoaxer, John O'Grady, wrote his best-selling book, *They're a Weird Mob*, under the pseudonym Nino Culotta, apparently based on the first-person experiences of an Italian immigrant.

West Australian artist Elizabeth Durack's revelation that she used a male Aboriginal pseudonym, Eddie Burrup, has revived memories of a row over fakes passed off as the works of the late Aboriginal artist, Emily Kngwarreye.

An Emily school emerged overnight, mostly comprising family members who under Aboriginal law are entitled to paint the same stories. Forgers have made a meal of famous Australian artists such as Norman Lindsay and Sir Arthur Streeton.

## Blast on Beijing rush-hour bus leaves two dead

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

AN EXPLOSION on a crowded bus in Beijing's busy Xidan shopping district during the rush hour last night killed two passengers and injured at least eight others, Chinese sources said.

Police set up roadblocks around central Beijing and were stopping and searching cars and checking drivers' identity papers. There was no immediate confirmation that the explosion was caused by a bomb, but observers said this was the most likely cause of the blast.

Emergency workers at the Jishui Tan hospital confirmed that injured people suffering from burns had been admitted and were receiving treatment. Witnesses at the hospital said the bus had pulled up at a stop and that the blast occurred when the doors opened.

Police and local officials refused to confirm anything had occurred but said they were investigating. Beijing has seen uncharacteristic tension during the past two weeks, a period that has also seen the death and funeral of senior leader Deng Xiaoping. There have been bomb attacks in the northwest Chinese region of Xinjiang in which nine people died. Members of a separatist group of Muslims

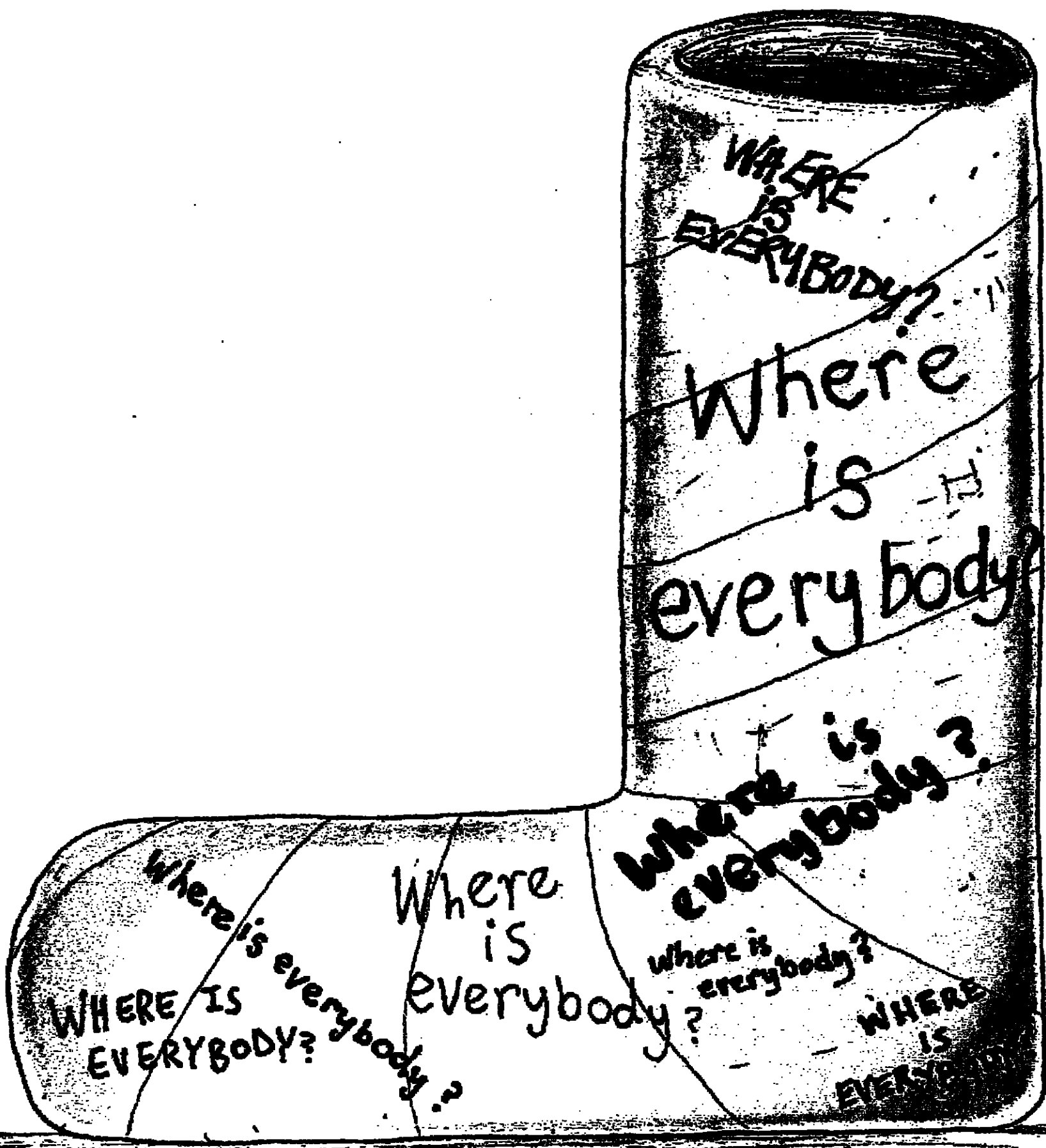
Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking minority, claimed responsibility for the blasts.

An area of northwest Beijing called Xinjiang village, where Uighurs have settled and opened several restaurants, has been the scene of heavy police surveillance over the past two weeks. Authorities were concerned that the violence could spread to Beijing.

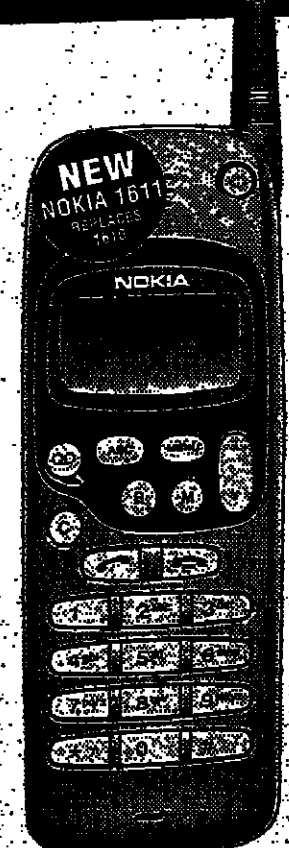
Exiled Uighur nationalists in neighbouring Kazakhstan said they organised the Xinjiang bombings and also a similar, previously unreported attack near the Kazakh border on Monday. The separatists want to set up an independent "East Turkestan" in Xinjiang.

The Chinese capital, despite the violent suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in 1989 and earlier student protests, is unused to terrorist violence. However, police have been on alert recently because of tensions with North Korea.

Police vans have been stationed outside the North Korean Embassy in Beijing for the past two weeks in case the North Koreans try to take a defector. Hwang Jang Yop, by force from the South Korean Consulate.



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# Life for Austrian 'black widow' who killed lonely hearts

By Roger Boyes

AUSTRIA'S "Black Widow" serial killer was jailed for life yesterday after a jury, arguing until the early hours, found her guilty of murder in a specimen case.

Elfriede Blauensteiner, a 66-year-old, gained her nickname because, like many female spiders, she killed her mates. At least five well-off pensioners, usually contacted through a lonely hearts' column, fell victim to her lethal brew of diabetic medicine and anti-depressants mixed with bedtime hot chocolate.

The specimen case was of Alois Pichler, a 77-year-old former postmaster. His lonely hearts' advertisement suggested that he was lonely and well-off, and Blauensteiner moved in with him soon after their first contact.

Two weeks later the man who had never been seriously ill before, fell into a coma. Two months later he was dead. Before his death his will had been changed in Blauensteiner's favour.

The dead man's nephew was suspicious and demanded an autopsy, at which it was discovered that Pichler died of

heart failure brought on by large doses of Euglucon, a medicine for diabetes.

Four months before meeting Pichler, Blauensteiner had buried her previous partner, a rich pensioner, Friedrich Döcker. Police investigated his case as well as her previous companions and discovered that she had left a trail of

**Widow, early sixties, would like to share the quiet autumn of her life with a widower**

death. Her accomplice in the Pichler case was Harald Schmidt, a lawyer who helped to change the will. He was imprisoned yesterday for seven years.

Blauensteiner was a familiar figure in the casino in Baden, a short drive outside Vienna, where she played roulette, blackjack and slot

machines. But the defence offered deeper psychological reasons, claiming that she was driven by a hatred of poverty and men. Her father died on the Russian front and she grew up with six brothers and sisters in a one-room Vienna flat. The only possibility of escape seemed to be marriage, but her first husband deserted her after the birth of their daughter.

"Since then," she told the court, "I have hated men." Her lonely hearts advertisements failed to mention this. Her typical entry was: "Widow, early sixties, 1.65 metres, would like to share the quiet autumn of her life with a widower. I am a housewife, gardener, nurse, and a faithful companion."

She confessed to at least five murders, but later withdrew the admissions. Of her first victim, she said: "I freed him from his pain." The second, a railway executive, poisoned over a period of six years, "deserved to die".

The Black Widow — who wore black in court yesterday — departed briefly from her pattern by poisoning a female neighbour in 1992. "She was ill



Elfriede Blauensteiner is led into court early yesterday to be sentenced for one specimen murder charge

and was suffering," said Blauensteiner, who ensured that the woman's will was altered in her favour. At least three other male victims, including Pichler, followed.

Blauensteiner collected more than £1.2 million in inherited property and cash.

Her lifestyle was that of a rich woman: generous tips, flashy restaurants and expensive fur coats.

After 12 hours of deliberation, ending at 3 am, the eight-member jury in Krems, west of Vienna, decided that she had been motivated by "pure

greed". Blauensteiner was described by the police as "cold as ice". When asked if she understood the sentence, she said defiantly: "I understand perfectly."

The court had been told that she arrived late at Pichler's funeral, threw a red rose on

the coffin and said: "Adieu Alois".

On the way back from the cemetery, on the back of the obituary notice, she scribbled the draft of a new lonely hearts' ad: "Widow, living alone, early sixties, car driver, attractive, seeks civil servant."

## WORLD SUMMARY

### Trial faces lover of Aids Briton

London: Greek Cypriot authorities are to prosecute a local fisherman who allegedly infected a British woman holidaymaker with Aids while he knew he was a carrier (Frances Gibb writes).

The Attorney-General, Alexander Markides, said yesterday that criminal charges would be brought against Paul Georgiou for passing the disease to Janette Pink, 39, a mother-of-two from Basildon, Essex.

### Basque cleared

Madrid: Spain's fragile jury system has come under attack after a jury in San Sebastián found a young Basque radical not guilty of the murder of two policemen, even after he confessed to taking "deliberate aim" and shooting the two men (Tunku Varadarajan writes). The jury said he "was not fully in control of himself" at the time of the shooting.

### Israeli pullout

Jerusalem: Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, yesterday narrowly overcame right-wing opposition to secure Cabinet approval for withdrawing troops from 9 per cent more of the occupied West Bank (Christopher Walker writes). The decision was promptly denounced by the Palestinians, who had expected 30 per cent.

### Belgians' plea

Brussels: The family of the latest Belgian girl found murdered appealed for calm after youths rioted over police incompetence. The remains of Loubna Benaissa, nine, were found at a garage five years after she vanished. Patrick Derocete, a sex offender working at the garage, has reportedly confessed to raping and murdering her. (AP)

### Manley dies at 72

Kingston: Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, a legendary figure in Caribbean politics and a leader of Third World causes, has died of prostate cancer. He was 72. (Reuters)

Obituary, page 23

## Fishing threat to wildlife haven

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

INDUSTRIAL fishing fleets have begun plundering the inshore waters around the world's most famous wildlife haven in a development that poses a dangerous threat to the unique Galápagos Islands wildlife.

Researchers said yesterday that tuna ships from Japan, the Ecuadorian mainland, Taiwan, North America and elsewhere were hoovering up fish stocks near the shore in defiance of the law. The fish, many of which are being discovered to be unique and found nowhere else in the world, are vital food sources for the islands' famous penguins and birds, including the red, blue and masked boobies.

Scientists, speaking in London, said that other disturbing developments were also emerging, including a sharp rise in the number of sealions being slaughtered for their

penises. "They are being sold as aphrodisiacs to the Far East... and the sealions' meat is being used as bait to catch sharks. These are being killed in increasing numbers, with their fins sold for sharkfin soup to the Far East and to communities on the Pacific coast of America," Dr Jack Grove, a scientist and expert of more than 20 years' experience in the islands, said.

Dr Grove, speaking at a meeting of the Galápagos Conservation Trust, said urgent international pressure was needed to save the rare and unique fish, sharks and other marine life. He said that the overfishing was part of a worldwide problem. But the value of the islands, in terms of their beauty and wildlife, should outweigh quick profits.

He added that the International

Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, based in Switzerland, was considering listing the Galápagos as "a World Heritage Site in peril".

Dr Grove, a member of Conservation Network and research associate in fish at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, said that the islands' wildlife, including giant tortoises and iguanas, were well known, but much of the marine life was emerging as unique. Many fish, like the land animals, appeared unafraid of man, he added, and were easy to catch and kill.

Emma Ridley, a guide with the Galápagos National Park, said yesterday that local laws allowed fishing by people living in the islands, but now they were witnessing uncontrolled spear-fishing and industrial fishing.



Galápagos sealions at Hood Island

## Yeltsin puts top aide in charge of reform

By Richard Beeston and Our Foreign Staff

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday appointed Anatoli Chubais, his powerful Chief of Staff, as First Deputy Prime Minister. The free-market reformer will be entrusted with the task of leading Russia's new drive for economic reform.

His appointment, made by the President's office, came as politicians waited in suspense for Mr Yeltsin's sweeping Cabinet reshuffle, which some fear could turn into a purge. Mr Chubais, who will serve under Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, held the same post until he was ousted last year. He later masterminded Mr Yeltsin's landslide election victory.

The appointment came a day after Mr Yeltsin promised sweeping changes to clean up a Government he accused of being "corrupt".

Mr Chubais is seen in the West as a dedicated devotee of the free market but he is vilified by the Opposition. Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader, said: "We will not obey orders from Chubais, no matter what his position."

□ Chechnya amnesty: The Duma, swallowing wounded pride over defeat in Chechnya, voted to give an amnesty to Chechen fighters in a bid to win freedom for Russian prisoners of war. (Reuters)

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Former British school teacher earns respect by keeping noisy band of leftwingers in order

## Classroom tactics rule

BRUSSELS FILE  
by CHARLES BREMNER

IN GALLIC governing circles, one of the sharpest putdowns is to accuse someone of failing to "know his dossier". Disgruntled Euro-leftwingers are levelling that charge these days against the formidable Englishwoman who holds the second most powerful post in the European Parliament.

## Euro-drivers in a jam

ANOTHER Briton has just been elevated to high office in the European Parliament, just in time to tackle another Belgian car feud. Julian Priestley, 46, who has spent his whole career in the halls of Euro-power, has taken over as secretary-general, or administrator, of the itinerant assembly. His immediate difficulty is to settle a dispute with the Brussels

move to rebuke the Commission for its handling of the BSE crisis. "It was almost Stalinist," a French Socialist said, still smarting from Mrs Green's efforts to drive through a middle course that in the end saved Jacques Santer and his colleagues from a censure vote that could have had them dismissed. The bout of parliamentary arm-twisting was all in a day's

work for the brisk Mrs Green, 48, a former Metropolitan policeman and school teacher, who has earned respect, if not affection, from her motley army of 213 leftwingers, who range from Scottish Old Labourites and Glens Kinnoch to German party barons and six French former Cabinet ministers. Mrs Green was picked as leader in 1994 after Britain elected 65 Labour MEPs, making them the biggest single-party bloc in the assembly that works in Brussels and Strasbourg. The Parliament's only post with a higher profile is that of its president, José-María Gil Robles.



Pauline Green receives roses after being elected leader of the Socialists in the European Parliament

Although almost unknown in Britain, where she is a leading figure in the Co-operative movement, Mrs Green cuts an imposing figure in the halls of Euro-power. Her 15-nation group has real clout in the business of legislation. "I'm happy walking towards the sound of gunfire," a lieutenant says. "She is not averse to throwing her weight around." Mrs Green's forthright manner has unbalanced many a

Eurocrat. In one sortie last month, she laid into Mr Santer for his "shambolic" management of the mad cow affair and told him he had nine months to "put your house in order". She dismissed Douglas Hogg as "Britain's hapless Agriculture Minister".

A mother of two and wife of a London police commander, the monolingual Mrs Green has made her name as an old-style party manager and deal-maker. As such, she has earned the respect of her rival, the cerebral Elisabeth Guigou, who led France's Maastricht negotiations as a minister under the late President Mitterrand.

## Old foes join forces over jobs

THERE has never been much love lost between Belgium and its big southern neighbour, but the decision by Renault last week to close its Belgian car factory at Vilvoorde, in the Brussels suburbs, has triggered a spasm of anti-French fury. The chief target is Louis Schweitzer, the French civil servant who became boss of the motor firm in 1992.

M. Schweitzer could hardly have done better if he had set out to turn himself into the most reviled villain outside jail. By announcing the imminent loss of about 4,000 jobs, including those of suppliers, he united the Walloons and Flemings.

Nobody apparently had told Renault's grand patron that Vilvoorde was home to Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Prime Minister. Flemish newspapers distributed the portrait of the owl-faced inspector of finances stamped with the word *harteles* (heartless). A new joke is doing the rounds: How many Frenchmen can fit in a Clio? Just one. The other three seats are needed for his "complexe de supériorité".

## Renault workers stage strikes

FROM BEN MACINTYRE  
IN PARIS

Schweitzer: concedes decision is brutal

IN AN unprecedented trans-European strike, Renault workers yesterday staged simultaneous stoppages in France, Belgium and Spain to protest against the car maker's decision to close its factory at Vilvoorde in Belgium and cut 6,000 jobs.

Despite union fury and a storm of criticism from French politicians and the European Commission, Louis Schweitzer, the Renault chairman, insisted that the closure of the Belgian factory in July with the loss of 3,100 jobs was traumatic but necessary. "It's a brutal, hard and painful decision," M. Schweitzer said. "If we do nothing, the company will die."

Up to one third of workers downed tools for one hour during each shift in Paris and other parts of France, while Belgian demonstrators from the threatened Vilvoorde plant massed outside the French

continued yesterday at plants in Clichy, Sandouville and Douai.

About 90 per cent of workers at four Renault plants in Spain downed tools for one hour and employees at factories operated in Belgium by General Motors, Volkswagen, Ford, Opel and Volvo also staged one-hour strikes in solidarity with their Renault counterparts.

Workers at Renault plants in Portugal, however, did not respond to the strike call.

Union leaders last night hailed the so-called "Euro-strike" as proof of cross-border workers' unity in the face of glaring gaps in European social legislation.

M. Schweitzer suggested that a new use might be found for the Vilvoorde factory and that some workers may be transferred to other plants, but he showed no sign of backing off from the radical restructuring plan.

Critics claim that he is callously taking advantage of

different labour costs across Europe, and on Thursday Karl Van Miert, the European Commissioner, announced he was blocking Spanish investment subsidies for Renault on the grounds that it was "absurd" to close the profitable Belgian plant.

The Spanish Government yesterday decided to suspend its request for approval of an \$8 million subsidy it had planned to provide for a Renault investment in Valladolid.

The management of the newly-privatised French automaker claims that the Vilvoorde plant was singled out because it has the highest production costs.

While President Chirac of France has expressed "shock" at the abrupt way the closure was announced, as M. Schweitzer pointed out "the French Government has not said that the decision should be altered, corrected or that it was not good for the company".

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OPINION

The French are so proud of their blue movies that they are mounting a festival of them in London

VISUAL ART

Welsh National Opera's staging of *Iphigénie en Tauride* is about as good as it gets

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE

Widows sees Ariel Dorfman returning to the same harrowing themes as in *Death and the Maiden*

ON MONDAY

In Stratford an epic production of *The Mysteries* hits the stage: read Benedict Nightingale's view

# First shots in a rumpy-pumpy war

When it comes to moaning about malign foreign influences on their culture, the French are universally acclaimed as world champions. Nothing makes hackles rise faster in Paris than the suspicion that *les Anglais* have concocted a dastardly plan to infiltrate the French language with hundreds of English words, or that Hollywood's secret agenda is to steamroller the French film industry to oblivion.

But now the French are hitting back. What's more, they are deploying a weapon so potent that it could rock the very foundations of British society. Yes, it's sex.

Every country makes sex films. Everyone has watched them at some time or another. (Oh all right, Virginia, you haven't.) But the French believe that theirs are a cut above the rest. Other nations produce blue movies. The French make "erotic masterpieces". And this week, to prove the point, they launched a huge official festival of their erotica right in the heart of London. The ultra-respectable

Institut Français, the French Government's cultural outpost in Britain, is to show 50 of "the most subversive films ever made in France or financed by French money — the forbidden fruit of French cinema".

Never before have so many Gallic gropes, so many frolics *françaises*, been unleashed in quick succession on innocent British sensibilities. Our stiff upper lips may never recover. *Mon Dieu*, even as I type *les titres* my fingers are trembling. Here is the ravishing Bardot in Vadim's *Et Dieu créa la femme*, and another eternal heart-throb, Jeanne Moreau, in Malle's *Les Amants*, now 40 years old but still censored on British videos. The naughty old Institut Français is showing it uncensored on Monday.

Here is Buñuel's *L'Age d'or*, banned for 50 years, and his *Belle*

*de Jour*. How many schoolboys of the 1960s scraped through O-level French by slipping illicitly into that fantasy-laden classic and making a close study of Catherine Deneuve's exquisite vowels?

And if that's too arty for your taste there's also *Emmanuelle* — complete with that epic scene of ingenious if improbable rumpy-pumpy in an aircraft loo — and the British premiere of the 1975 sensation, *Histoire d'O*, which is apparently so shocking that the French have never dared let it cross *la Manche* before, in case it gives us ideas. And if you think this is old hat, the Institut is also screening "erotic vignettes" of the 1990s.

Clearly, this is the first shot in a cultural war. The French have flung down the gauntlet, and indeed the rest of their clothing. Their film industry is obviously over-sexed, over-subsidised and



RICHARD MORRISON

over here. Our own British Council must retaliate. Hire the best filmhouse in Paris, chaps. Round up the sauciest *oeuvres* in British cinema. Shall we say *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* and *Curry*

On Nurse for starters? Let's show our continental friends that, if it comes to serious action on the dirty-mac front, the British are quite capable of holding their own.

And on the subject of high-brow cultural exchanges, are you up to speed on this year's Eurovision Song Contest? Readers of *The Times* — sophisticated, mature individuals, on the whole — perhaps may not be aware that Britain's participation in this venerable joust has reached something of a crisis point. We used to win the thing quite often. Now we haven't won for years.

To make matters worse, the Irish and Norwegians (unlikely victors in recent years) have changed the rules. In the old days, it was either a better year or a shaker year. If it was a better year, some glass-shattering, gurgling,

gargling sub-Piaf wail from France or Luxembourg would win with a throbbing, adenoidal ballad. If it was a shaker year, Britain's entry — comprising one or more micro-skirted lovelies, frantically wobbling all available protuberances — would triumph.

But the Norwegians and Irish cheated. They introduced proper melodies. Not fair! Since when was music allowed in the Eurovision? The British panicked. Two years ago, we tried to regain the initiative by going all trendy with a rap song. It was a dismal flop, naturally. The Eurovision is about as closely attuned to contemporary pop as Dame Barbara Cartland is to sumo-wrestling.

So last year we reverted to the palpitating leggy-lovely formula, and put forward a more-or-less undressed young damsel called Gina G in a breathy little number

called *Ooh, Aah (Just a Little Bit)*. (Second line: "Ooh, aah, just a little bit more". You get the drift.) Mystifyingly, this intellectually bracing material got ooh, aah, just nowhere with the hard-hearted juries of Europe.

Now we are trying a new strategy. It's called satire. Tomorrow, BBC TV viewers will vote on which song represents Britain this year. The favourite is a number called *Yodel in the Canyon of Love*. And if you think that title is the ultimate in daftness, you haven't heard the song itself. It's a brilliantly barmy item, quite possibly brilliant and barmy enough, in fact, to unite Europe in a single glorious cry of "douze points".

But if Europe decides that it doesn't care for *Yodel in the Canyon of Love* — and let's face it, the title might lose something in translation to Estonian — then we can say that we only entered the song as a joke anyway. Perfect! We either win the big prize, or we ridicule the whole set-up. Bit like the Maastricht treaty, really.

## THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale on Ariel Dorfman's fearful *Widows*

# Waiting for tears

Atrocities occur. The tyrants responsible are forced from power. But the new government is insecure, dependent on the goodwill of the army, or maybe influenced by infiltrators from the former regime. How is it to deal with the wrongdoers who still walk the streets and punish the crimes that poison the national soul? They are questions that have yet to be fully answered in parts of Eastern Europe and Latin America. They continue to obsess the Chilean dramatist Ariel Dorfman.

Hence his masterpiece, *Death and the Maiden*, in which a woman takes revenge on the doctor she believes oversaw her torture and rape. But that posits his treatment of much the same theme in *Widows*, which was a novel in 1978 and a not-too-satisfactory play by 1988. Only now, after a collaboration with the American dramatist Tony Kushner, followed by yet more slog by Dorfman himself, is a definitive *Widows* ready to be taken on tour by Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre. Was it worth the struggle?

I thought so the moment the lights went up at Cambridge's Arts Theatre on a viaduct overlooking a river on whose bank some ten women in black were gathered, looking like a chorus from Aeschylus or Lorca, and I still thought so at the end. By then, Dorfman had given his answer to the question posed by the mothers, wives and daughters of men abducted by authorities who now ask for rapprochement and the spirit of forgiveness. Before anything so chummy can occur the village's male population must be returned, alive or dead, and the killers must be punished. Nothing else will do.

The speaker is Edith Macarthur's Sofia, whose father,

husband and two sons have disappeared. She sits by the river grimly awaiting their return and regarded by the other women as "stubborn, bitter, a tombstone" and a potential provocation to army officers who include an unrepentantly fascist lieutenant as well as a captain who believes peace can be achieved without rancour or reparations. But then bloated, faceless, battered corpses arrive by river. Who are they? The women come en masse to claim them, and an edgy military fears it has new troubles on its hands.

*Widows* is not the unequivocal success *Death and the Maiden* was. Dorfman has not quite fulfilled his aim of

wedding the realistic and mythic, the colloquial and the larger-than-life. In some of his characterisation he sacrifices finesse to simplicity. The narrator, a Dorfman surrogate who talks of his exile, his feelings of impotence and his need to bear witness, does not add enough to justify his intermittent, moaning presence. Moreover, Ian Brown's cast, their accents ranging from demotic Scots to genteel English, don't always achieve the right intensity.

But you cannot miss the generosity of Dorfman's attempts to reach into the mind of Sean Scannell's flummoxed Captain, as he wars with his atrocity-weary sense of decency, or the power that sometimes emerges from the embattled women. There is a moment in the first half when they become a chorus, all waiting over the latest unidentified corpse: "It's mine, it's mine, please don't let it be mine." They half-want a man to bury decently and half-want to keep their fragile hopes alive. I imagine that's how many women in Chile and Argentina feel to this day.



The uniformly excellent Didier Henry (Oreste) and Diana Montague (Iphigénie) in WNO's *Iphigénie en Tauride*

# Brilliant beyond belief

There are evenings when lightning strikes an operatic performance, and one's sense of proportion falls. Welsh National Opera's revival of Gluck's *Iphigénie* was one such. In the aftermath of a simply shattering performance, one was left wondering, whether any other composer has understood with such blinding clarity just what that exotic and irrational combination of words and notes called "opera" can yield, and indeed whether a greater opera has ever been written.

The Patrice Caubert and Moshe Leiser production, new five years ago but meticulously re-rehearsed in the aftermath of their *Carmen*, is severe almost to a fault: grey walls for a set, monochrome contemporary costumes with no differentiation between Greeks and Scythians. There

## OPERA

### Iphigénie en Tauride Cardiff

is nothing to distract from the pitiless human drama, and with a cast as fine as that assembled at the New Theatre, it is pitiless indeed.

As before, Diana Montague is Iphigénie, and the only possible criticism is that her voice is almost too beautiful for a character in such pain. But her command of long, unbroken Gluckian lines, her poise, her use of words, are impeccable, and her singing in the great second-act Lament held the audience breathless. Peter Brondier returned as Pylade, and his delivery of *Unis de la plus tendre enfance*, that *Liebestod* for tenor, was the most expressive I have yet heard from this increasingly valuable artist.

There was one notable newcomer, the French baritone Didier Henry as Oreste. He is a superb, fearless actor. Before even opening his mouth he told you through body lan-

guage alone of a man racked with guilt: add his warm, closely focused timbre and pungent declamation of the text, and you had an impersonation of almost unbearable intensity. Thus Oreste and Pylade arguing about which should die to save the other had the urgency of Alceste and Admète — oh pitiless Gluck — at the gates of Hades. Malcolm Donnelly, also new, made an ideally dour (if less than ideally steady) Thoas.

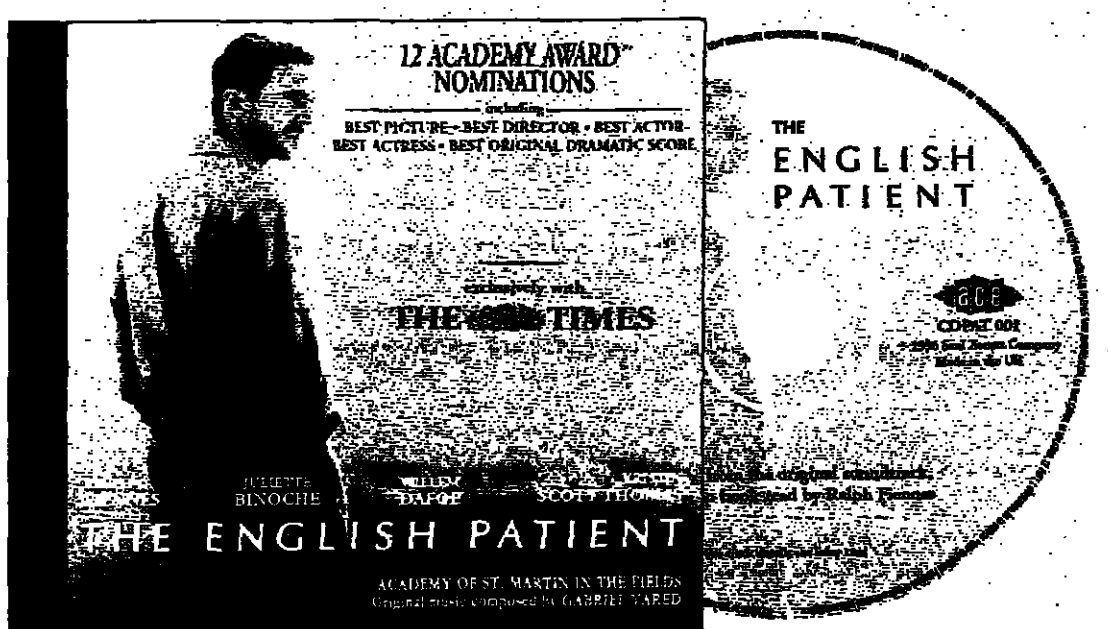
The American conductor Steven Sloane combined due weight of sound with a sense of "period" derived from sparing string vibrato — the best of both worlds. He never pushed the recitatives were wonderfully spacious, but let the drama unfold naturally in all its grandeur, encouraging his soloists to sing on a thread of tone in passages of intimate personal stress, allowing uncountable seconds of silence at moments where the drama is so white-hot that even notes and words seem inadequate. Here is a conductor who understands Gluck's genius.

This revival is now going on the road, with only five more performances. It must be seen.

RODNEY MILNES

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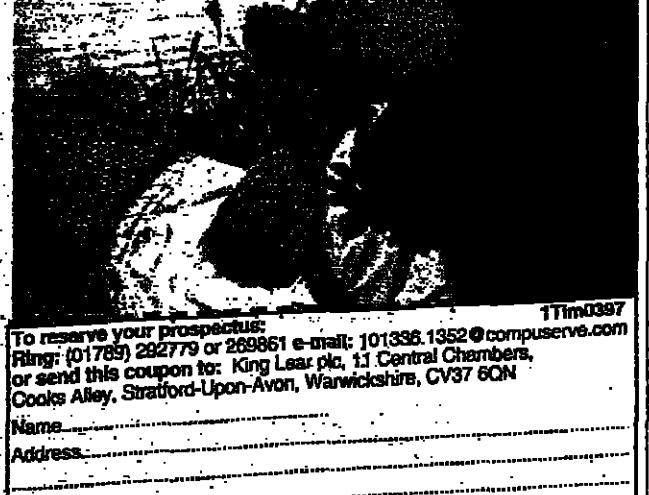
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# I shan't vote for these philistines

Sir Peter Hall says neither of the major parties cares about the arts

Why must democracy grow up these crops of political cowards?

This is not a columnist writing about the antics of the Euro-sceptics, but a line from Harley Granville Barker's *Waste*, a play written in 1926 and, to my mind, the witest and most candid exposure of politics since Shakespeare. It deals with a leader who aims to privatise the Church of England and use its revenues to build a great new system of national education. His efforts are frustrated by an avalanche of what we would now call "sleaze". He is involved with a married woman who dies undergoing an illegal abortion. In its day, the play was banned, probably more for its honesty about politicians than for its sexual awareness.

While I have been relishing the ironies of *Waste* in a rehearsal room, the tide of negative advertising has grown higher and higher on the billboards outside. The coming general election has been reduced to the level of playground abuse by all the silly slogans.

And the other day I realised that I wasn't going to vote: there was no point. Under our insane electoral rules, my vote wouldn't even count as a protest. My decision will bother nobody but me; but both parties are so craven when it comes to what I care about.

Our culture is my concern, and particularly the state of the arts. And this is not only because I earn my living making plays, operas and films. The English language is now our greatest export, and our prowess in the arts is still an international wonder (just in a world increasingly uninterested in the talents of the British).

But what about our politicians? The Tories have quietly decimated the arts over the past 18 years in the cause of free enterprise. There has been little consolation from Labour, whose tentative and muddled policy on the arts is a deep disappointment.

It is worth recalling the original idea of subsidy: to provide money so that admission prices could be kept low. Anyone who had a taste for the arts could therefore afford to enjoy them. But "get what the market can bear" was the Arts Council's edict under Thatcher. And the consequence is that you and I now pay high taxes to fund the Royal Opera House (which I don't begrudge) and are then asked to pay £150 a ticket, which I do.

In the 1980s the Tories launched their sponsorship schemes: the private sector was to contribute to the arts in order to encourage the development of new and exciting projects. It sounded plausible. We live in a mixed economy, so it seemed right that the arts, too, should have mixed funding. It was also stressed that sponsorship money would never affect central government funding.

The promise was, of course, broken. By always pitching grants below the level of inflation, the real subsidy was reduced year by year. By the 1990s, some theatres had as many people working on fundraising as were on the stage.

Labour sounded a little better during this time, although it is true that at the height of the old Greater London Council, there was distrust of "centres of excellence" such as the National Theatre, because they were deemed elitist. Money was to be given instead to community centres so that everyone could become artists together. But generally speaking, Labour's heart seemed in the right place.

Meanwhile the great erosion of the arts, the giveaway of our broadcasting system and the decline in our educational standards

continued. The arts in particular have been deliberately discredited during the past ten years by a carefully selected vocabulary used by Tory politicians. Artists who turned to the Arts Council for support were told they had a welfare state mentality; if they protested, they were called "whingers". And the acting profession could always be declared brain-dead by branding them "luvvies".

Then came a new instrument of destruction: the National Lottery. Once again, we were told that it would never affect central subsidy. Although initially it was used only for developing or refurbishing buildings, the lottery is taking a more and more central position. I believe that if the Tories are re-elected, it will be used to stop subsidy altogether. Then (because of the genuine social need) we could well be told that lottery money must be used for good works such as new hospitals instead. So the bonus could be short-lived.

Meanwhile, Tony Blair has at last pronounced on the future of the arts. He was high on their commercial value ("the creative economy"), full of promise for some post-millennium future (funded by the lottery, of course) but very low indeed on any recognition of the crisis we are in today. There is not a regional orchestra without financial troubles, nor a regional theatre that has not had to cut back its productions, reduce its actors and, consequently, reduce its audiences. The regional theatre is dying fast, and this will soon have an effect on our great central theatre institutions and ultimately on the standard of our broadcasting. Above all, we have neglected the young who are tomorrow's audiences.

Seat prices must come down: subsidy must be used again to ensure accessibility. And young people who have talent must again be properly supported by government grants through music college and drama school. Tony Blair mentioned none of this. Instead we were asked to look forward to rebuilding the decimated arts some time in the new century through the agency of a new body called Nesta, which is not a bedtime drink but the National Endowment for Science, Humanities and the Arts. Once again it is funded by the lottery. So there is jam tomorrow but no need of jam today.

Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, derided this pale Labour policy as a "luvvies' charter", demonstrating the complete contempt that the Conservative Party has for the acting profession. I sometimes think we now have two Tory parties, one moving to the right and one maintaining its position in the centre, desperately seeking election. But neither cares about the state of our culture. And they allow us to be just as indifferent about other great issues such as the funding of parties by sectional interests, our absurd electoral system, or Europe. Our national complacency is kept secure.

I live in Chelsea, as safe a seat as the Tories can muster. Our candidate is Alan Clark, so if I am feeling in an anarchic mood, he presents an amusing temptation. But I cannot vote for him. I have only voted Tory once when, in 1979, it seemed vital to curb the power of the unions. Thatcher achieved this on a minority vote and I was glad. But I never bargained for the rest of her revolution, which celebrated greed and encouraged our society to become more brutal. So I shall pass, regretfully.

Sometimes I think we now have two Tory parties

Lord Nolan urges young people not to prefer public protest to democratic participation

I learnt two lessons from the setting up of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The first was the importance of a free press, with investigative skills and resources in bringing to light matters of public concern which would otherwise remain hidden. The second was the power of the media to influence the conduct of government and of political life. There is much talk of accountability, but it sometimes overlooks the most obvious example — the availability of almost everyone in public life, from the Prime Minister downwards, to answer questions from journalists or broadcasters at almost any hour of day or night.

I am a wholehearted supporter of a free and, where necessary, investigative press. In all the countries I know, a free press goes with an independent judiciary — in which I have a vested interest but which I believe to be equally important. But there is a price to be paid.

One part of that price, excessive cynicism about public life, is reflected in the picture of suspicion and distrust of politicians and journalists which opinion polls reveal. It was also reflected in the correspondence which we received from people in all walks of life. When we asked newspaper editors whether they shared the public's distrust of politicians, they assured us that

## Are we a nation of political cynics?

they did not. They said that our politicians were, on the whole, honest and hard-working. How then did the public get this false impression of politicians, unless through the newspapers? The editors said that newspapers were not to blame. The politicians brought it on themselves. There is clearly some truth in this. Politicians, particularly when a general election is in sight, are apt to accuse each other of dishonesty, and the public may be forgiven for thinking that the politicians ought to know.

When falling into superficial criticism on the basis of newspaper reports, I remind myself of the danger of armchair cynicism. It is all too easy to blame others — politicians are dishonest, judges are too soft on crime, or the local council is corrupt. If you feel yourself inclined to adopt opinions like that, I urge you not to sit back but to do something about it. This is

a free country, but we only deserve our freedom if we make proper use of it. If you think that politicians are dishonest, and possibly corrupt, go and talk to your MP or your local councillor. If you think that the judges are too soft on criminals, spend a day in the nearest Crown Court. Only then will you have something on which to form your own judgment. And if you still think something is wrong, do something about it. Get involved. Use your democratic rights, especially free speech.

We have a general election coming. Yet some people seem weary of the campaign before it has started. There has been concern about the low opinion young people in particular seem to have of politicians and the political process. I have been struck by the need to have campaigns to get young people to vote, both here

and in the United States. Have we really reached the stage where the right to vote, so hard-won by earlier generations, has now to be sold like a patent medicine show?

We therefore need to beware of cynicism. Young people are not cynical in any general sense of the word. In particular, they are not cynical about aims and ideals. But they may be cynical, like some of their elders, about politicians and political processes. I think here about the recent roads protests. Some protesters were quoted as rubbishing the right to vote and urging the power of direct action.

They are utterly wrong to disparage the ballot box. There is a place for public protest in a democracy. But you cannot reach a sensible view about competing priorities by focusing your action on one issue and leaving all the others aside. The function of democracy is to enable civilised debate about diffi-

cult issues that cannot be reduced to simple good versus bad. Promoting direct action above democratic participation is tantamount to contempt for your fellow citizens.

But voting is just the beginning. I urge you to go beyond this and get involved in politics, meeting and questioning people in public life, either for a party or an issue. The British disease is an unthinking cynicism about politics. The cure is not careful sloth, and certainly not cynicism: it is participation. Governments have a great capacity to do good, and just as great a capacity to do harm. The only way to be sure that they do the right thing is to keep an eye on them, to challenge them, to hold them to account and, above all, to take part in them.

Public life in this country, in politics or in the media, is as attractive as ever for those who want to change the world. It is not for those who want to get rich quick. Public life is for the brave, for the tough and for those who want power, not just for its own sake but also for unselfish reasons. There are plenty of people like that in this country. After two and a half years of inspecting sleaze, I remain a democrat and an optimist.

This is an edited extract from a speech given this week to St John's College Political Society, Portsmouth.

## Rural ride among the ruins



Where Cobbett saw pleasant pastures, today we see an industrial countryside, prey to polluting profiteers

When William Cobbett gazed the last of the Surrey hills on his approach to London, he saw before him a pestilential bog. Behind him lay a country of honest Englishmen, a land of yeomen who held fast to the old ways, to free enterprise and sound money. Ahead lay "a great wen... a monster called the metropolis of empire". Over the Thames basin rose a stench of decrepitude. The restless city seethed with politics, monopolists, lobbyists, immorality and paper money.

Today the author of *Rural Rides* might feel a reverse sensation. The great wen is now a city set in stone. It evolves, but roughly to plan. London is broadly the same physical entity it was at the war's end, and will be inherited as such by future generations. Its land use is conserved under tight laws and the property market flourishes within their constraints.

Look out on the modern countryside and Cobbett would cry with anguish. He would see an anarchy of greed and politics. He would rage at the yeomen of England drenching their fields in chemicals, tearing out their hedges, polluting their streams and throwing up silos, bungalows and wind farms with no care for anything but cash. Terrified politicians bicker and shower farmers with money. When they poison the nation's food by their malpractices, they are not punished but compensated with paper money from the pockets of taxpayers.

How Cobbett would have railed. Yet even today he would have found few supporters. Criticising countryside is still politically incorrect. You may insult the city (or business or journalism) and pass muster, but you may not insult that most delicate sensibility, farming. The BBC dare not pension off *The Archers*, begun as a plug for agriculture after the war. British culture was to have no finer community of souls than Amb-

ridge. Like doctors and policemen, the farmer was awarded that professional gong, a warm-hearted serial on the Beeb.

The game is surely up. After 14 years of explaining to farmers how to poach subsidy from the taxpayer, the story editor of *The Archers*, Graham Harvey, has turned gamekeeper. The business has stuck in his throat. In *The Killing of the Countryside*, published by Cape this week, he concludes that almost all farming has become a mega-industry polluting out of control. Its raw material is 80 per cent of the landscape, which it is ruining. Nor is the ruin anything to do with market economics. The destruction is at the behest of government policy and with taxpayers' money, some £10 billion a year.

Harvey's book is a modern *Grapes of Wrath*. He is enraged at ministers who subsidise industrial farming because big farmers are the best lobbyists (including 32 MPs). He is appalled that taxpayers must support methods that strip land of wildlife, erode topsoil and pollute rivers. When a salmonella, BSE or E. coli scandal brings the juggernaut to a halt, he sees a Treasury rushing forward with cash to get it moving again. "We have abandoned our countryside to the grubbers and sprayers, the exploiters and the profiteers," he writes. "We have allowed them to assault our landscapes, wage war on our wildlife and abuse our farm livestock. Now finally they have corrupted the purity of our food."

I have read such diatribes before, from Marjion Shoard, Oliver Rackham and numerous critics of Brussels farm policies. I have seldom read a more meticulous or devastating case for the prosecution. (Nor have I read a rejoinder that is other than self-serving.)

Harvey lists the payments that made last year the most lucrative for agriculture in recent history, as prices and subsidies soared upwards in happy tandem. Farmers derided tourists and rambblers as "vandals", yet they demanded that those same visitors pay them £3.2 billion in BSE compensation. The "anti-vandals" ripped out 11,000 miles of hedge last year alone, sprayed more tons of nitrate into the soil and denuded the nation of skylarks, nightingales, corn bunting and lapwings. If a motor-

can feed itself on a quarter of its present farmed land. Paying anyone merely to exist is poor economics. Paying 12 farmers more than £1 million each for unwanted food, as happened last year, is indefensible.

Harvey has two crystal-clear prescriptions: stop subsidies altogether, and impose on farming planning control without compensation, as exists in towns. Land prices would fall. Some marginal land would go out of production and revert to woodland and common, but new entrepreneurs ready to exploit the new market could afford to buy land. If intensive farmers "behaved worse" to sustain yield, they should be stopped, as urban property developers are stopped. The bureaucracy that goes into paying subsidies should go into conserving a landscape that 80 per cent of non-farmers want to protect — and for which they have already paid through the nose. This is not to penalise farmers, just to treat them like everybody else.

Planning does not impoverish. As Harvey and Shoard have pointed out, the richest parts of cities are nowadays those most carefully regulated. The Duke of Westminster cannot demolish his properties in Belgravia as he could his properties in Cheshire. That does not make Belgravia less lucrative. All land in a democracy is "planned", since it is in limited supply. The challenge of planning is to make the free market work with, rather than against, the grain of public opinion. The core principle is that of regulation without crippling compensation. This principle has been applied to manufacturing industry since the 19th century and to urban land development since the 1930s. It should now apply to the countryside. Paying farmers not to farm is obscene.

While Harvey's attachment to rural values and organic production can be cloying, his argument is robust. He has no truck with National Farmers' Union blackmail — "maintain subsidies or we shall behave even worse" — nor with taxpayers giving farmers money to be rural conservationists. He bids them live or die as do other mortals, in a regulated marketplace. There is no reason to continue a subsidy regime meant for war. Britain, indeed all Europe,

can feed itself on a quarter of its present farmed land. Paying anyone merely to exist is poor economics. Paying 12 farmers more than £1 million each for unwanted food, as happened last year, is indefensible.

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Harvey's prescription is no leap in the dark. In 1984 the New Zealand Cabinet (true Thatcherites, as opposed to Britain's half-hearted ones) decided to end farm subsidies — and did. Land prices and food prices fell, as did public expenditure. The result, says Harvey, "is that the price of land in New Zealand now reflects the market value of its output, not the capitalised value of public support". Agriculture did not end.

The countryside is cited as the chief reason why visitors come to Britain. Among Britons it came third, after "freedom" and the National Health Service in a MORI poll on what people think is good about Britain. I am a city-dweller who loves the countryside simply as a pleasure to behold. I admire those few farmers who care about its diversity and beauty, and who seem always to be fighting a subsidy regime intent on making them ruin it. A regulated free market could not make it worse.

Every government coming to power promises to "end the lunacies of the common agricultural policy" — as now is Labour. It then piles lunacy on lunacy. These promises are empty. Each attempt to reform the CAP increases its cost. European farm policy is like the medieval Calais wool staple, a producer monopoly in restraint of trade. Its essence is to resist its own reform.

Harvey's grim message is that this policy is not just expensive. It is polluting Britain's environment while undermining the quality of life and the purity of food. If so, there has been no more grotesque abuse of public administration in modern times.

Cobbett wrote that "from a very early age, I imbibed the opinion that it was every man's duty to do all that lay in his power to leave his country as good as he found it". Today the old growler would survey the landscape, turn in his saddle and spit.

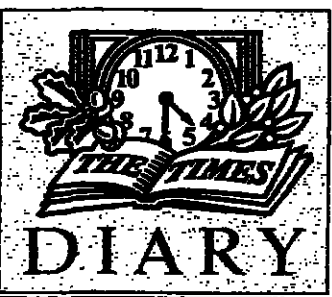
## Big shot

THE PRINCE OF WALES has spent £65,000 on a pair of hand-made 28-bore shotguns from Asprey's in Bond Street, according to Edward Asprey, in Melbourne for the Grand Prix. The 28-bores are designed with women and children in mind, although they have become popular with Americans who like light guns for shooting quail and woodcock. They might make a handsome

confirmation present for Prince William, although giving one each to William and Harry might make for a happier Easter holidays. It can be safely assumed that Camilla Parker Bowles wouldn't mind having the shooters, either. Whoever they are meant for, the purchase shows that the Prince retains his affection for shooting, despite all the fuss when William shot a stag and he was photo-



Prince of Wales: new shotguns



graphed fooling around with his sons and their guns over Christmas.

The standard 28-bore goes for £27,500, but the Prince has gone for additional scrolled engraving jolts, the gun equivalent of go-faster stripes on a car, bumping the guns up to £32,500 each. At least the money will be going to a fellow royal. Asprey's is now owned by Prince Jeffrey of Brunei, the brother of the Sultan, who reportedly spent so much on knick-knacks in the shop that he thought he might as well buy it.

Less important matters were put aside at Thursday morning's Cabinet meeting as the Prime Minister began by offering collective Cab-

net congratulations to William Hague on his engagement. As the Cabinet Secretary duly transcribed the good wishes into the minutes, Hague beamed, and his cranium glowed a sugary pink.

### Budged out

ONCE whipless, now just disgruntled, Nicholas Budgen, Tory MP for Wolverhampton South West, has complained to the Chief Whip about the Prime Minister. In the Commons on Tuesday, Budgen rose to ask the PM about immigration control. The Labour benches shouted him down, calling him "a disgrace" and worse.

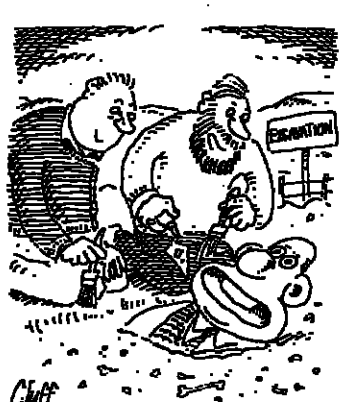
The PM gave a terse reply, which to the casual observer looked like a slapdown. Horrifyingly, even Tony Blair rose to congratulate the PM on his answer. "I would like immigration made an election issue, and an apology," Budgen growls. No 10 is unlikely to give one.

### Bias cut

COMPLAINTS from the political parties about bias on the BBC seem to have had their effect. BBC Radio

2 has dropped an interview with Tony Benn due to air on Wednesday from a series called *Salt of the Earth*, in which well-known figures discuss their interpretation of the Beatitudes. Benn had chosen to talk about "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness". His tone, however, has been deemed too politically sensitive before a general election.

The BBC's religious department



"I think we've stumbled across Wensleydale Man"

said: "In order to avoid what could be perceived as political imbalance, the BBC took the view that this series should be amended." Benn has been replaced by Myra Hindley's former solicitor, Andrew McCooey.

Harry, an American Harris hawk, has been employed by the Rugby Football Union to rid Twickenham of pigeons. Once a week, Harry swoops around the stadium scaring the other birds who roost and unbend themselves in the stands. A wily spokesman at the RFU says: "He comes on a different day each week, to keep the pigeons on their toes."

### Stock trade

HAROLD Macmillan's granddaughter has taken to modelling. Rebecca Macmillan, 17, the daughter of the present Earl of Stuckton, is currently in her last year at Marlborough. On Thursday evening, however, she turned out for a fashion show in Belgrave Square organised by the rock dealer Fiona Aiken, former girlfriend of Sir Benjamin Slade, the money behind John Redwood's leadership campaign. Slade, incidentally, is build-



Macmillan: walking tall

ing a £50,000, two-tiered kennel for his dogs in Somerset. Miss Macmillan's brother, Dan, 21, joined a modelling agency after leaving Eton. His sister, however, will have to overcome her shyness if she is to show a split pelmet skirt off to its best advantage. "It was quite fun," she says, "but rather humiliating as well."

P.H.S





## PAY AS YOU ERR

The pension industry must give back as quickly as it took

Daylight robbery, literally, has been the fate of at least 600,000 people in the past ten years or so. Yet what they suffered will never be recorded in the crime statistics. Had the actions of large parts of the private pension industry in Britain during the past decade been openly unlawful there would have been a national outcry. As it is, the theoretically legal and technical nature of their plight has largely hidden the story from public view.

It is difficult to understate the scale of the pension scandal of the 1980s. For good reasons a degree of deregulation was introduced into what had previously been a distinctly uncompetitive area. The management of some of Britain's best-known and most important financial institutions responded by unleashing an army of salesmen onto the public. These task forces, whose salaries were largely dependent on commissions, persuaded hundreds of thousands of people to abandon very sound company pension schemes or the Serps system — both of which had a guaranteed benefit package — in favour of personal pension schemes of dubious relative value.

That the plans being sold were unattractive is not a matter of conflicting opinion, alternative interpretation, or even of variable economic assumptions. To those who understood the detail they were self-evidently of inferior value. The sole purpose both of the snake-oil salesmen and the senior executives who employed them was to maximise their own financial standing at considerable cost to their "clients". Their victims were all too frequently the poorly paid and financially innocent who believed, and were entitled to believe, on the basis of what they were told, that their contributions would provide a substantial sum in future years. In practice, exorbitant fees and charges swallowed a huge proportion of their investment.

When the full scale of this outrage became evident, the predictable happened. Large numbers of salesmen were dismissed but the overwhelming majority of the management who had inspired, hired, and ultimately fired them, kept their own posts and company pension plans. Almost seven years ago, when the affair was exposed, promises were made by those responsible that the whole matter would be investigated and those who suffered compensated. Those pledges have proved about as reliable as the original policies.

For all the huffing and puffing from the Securities and Investments Board only a few of those affected have either been placed back into the original programmes from which they were duped or been awarded a reciprocal cash settlement. The trade lobby insists that it would like to move faster but that these matters are extremely complicated. The same firms were able to move quickly enough when they saw the opportunity to remove cash from these customers. The regulator should demand a similar level of speed when it comes to restoring it. Sir Andrew Large has been given three weeks by Angela Knight, junior Treasury Minister, to effect this. He should regard it as a matter of personal honour that he does so.

This week one of the most imaginative ideas for pension provision in a century has been placed by Peter Lilley before the British public. It is painful to admit that the best objection to it is not the motives of the politicians concerned, nor the small print beneath the superstructure, but whether the private pension industry is worthy of the trust implicit. That should be a matter of deeper shame for the companies concerned. Until the ill deeds of the past decade are properly dealt with, little faith can be placed in either industry or regulator by the pensioners of the future.

## COUNTRY CONSENSUS

Campaigners seek to hunt, shoot and stand together

The hunting horn is giving forth an uncertain sound. The proposed merger of the Countryside Movement, the Countryside Business Group and the British Field Sports Society (BFSS) is intended to give supporters of traditional country pursuits a more coherent campaigning voice. With Labour committed to ending hunting on government land, and likely to give the Commons the opportunity to ban the sport outright, defenders of rural tradition will need to show solidarity. Unfortunately, the brief history of the Countryside Movement, and the worries around its proposed merger, suggest that lessons still need to be learnt by those who speak for rural Britain.

The last merger which involved the Countryside Movement's chairman, Sir David Steel, involved a traditional outfit, his Liberal Party, swallow an upstart rival, the SDP. This time the dynamic is the same, but the roles are reversed. The Countryside Movement was launched to break the mould of rural politics by uniting defenders of the natural environment and social ecology. It sought, wisely, to connect the fortunes and interests of rural workers, traditional tradespeople, sportsmen, residents and sensitive environmentalists. Sadly, as Sir David concedes, his Movement did not attract the funds or momentum it hoped for and now it is to join forces with the, much older, BFSS.

As with the merger of Liberals and SDP, the fusion has also created splits. The BFSS's main energies have been devoted to defending hunting and there are tensions between horse and hound on one side, and rod and gun on the other. The National Federation of Anglers' president, who sits on the board of the Countryside Movement, will not join the merged body and neither will the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. Both fear that they will be tarnished by too

close a link with the hunting lobby. They believe that Labour has hunters in its sights and do not want to suffer collateral damage.

Their concerns are understandable, if narrow. Given the popularity of fishing it seems unlikely that Labour would move against the sport. Shooting is a slightly different matter. Although it does not attract the visceral opposition of animal rights activists in the same way as hunting, the zeal with which Labour has argued for a total ban on handguns suggests a future atrocity committed with a shotgun or rifle could bring even tighter restrictions on gun use.

It is not, however, on a fine calculation of lobbying advantage that the future health of rural traditions will depend. All those who know and enjoy the real countryside, whether in pink, tweed, denim or waders, should seek to ensure they work together: their sympathies are stronger than their differences. With politics increasingly dominated by urban professionals and Labour still overwhelmingly the party of cities and suburbs, the concerns of rural Britain need to be articulated effectively. Hunters, fishers and shooters as well as saddlers, groomers and others coexist in a delicate social ecology. It is in no conservationist's interest to see it so rudely upset.

A ban on hunting would adversely affect the quality of country life for most rural residents. It would deprive many of employment as well as enjoyment and rob communities of a widely-appreciated and unobnoxious social focus. Of course, some hunt supporters are guilty of an almost ferocious attachment to the chase; but a genuinely liberal temperament should tolerate the settled habits of a significant minority. Hunting may need reform, but it also needs friends if the familiar contours of the countryside are not to disappear.

## SHINING EXAMPLE

A grateful, graceful pianist — unless you are a US critic

The Australian film *Shine* has captivated audiences around the world because of its inspirational message. The triumph of the spirit over mental breakdown, the redeeming power of love and the exhilaration of music reverberate in all discussion afterwards. Little wonder that public curiosity about David Helfgott, the pianist whose story is told in the film, is insatiable or that audiences are flocking to hear the playing of a man whose early promise was so blighted.

Responding to this crescendo of interest, Mr Helfgott has now begun a concert tour of the US to rapturous acclaim by the public. But the critics have been vituperative. In savage reviews that smack of spite, they have attacked his performance as shapeless and incoherent, described his first concert as a painful and disturbing experience and accused him of playing without phrasing, form, accuracy or emotional content.

Their wounding remarks have been prompted, many believe, by pique that the public's reaction has been dictated not by the public's reaction but by the public's reaction. Their criticism is a non-American one at that. These sour tantrums have, in turn, infuriated American audiences whose standing ovations were a tribute as much to Mr Helfgott's return from the brink of madness as to his music.

Has American criticism become so devoid of human warmth, so isolated in its pursuit of aesthetic that it is blind to the strivings and

achievements that inspire people? Such questions are often put to critics — not least by performers, artists and writers. They reply that their job is not to offer subjective judgments on personality or be swayed by an artist's popularity but to evaluate the worth of the oeuvre put before the public. They would deny the accusation that they are particularly harsh on those whose acclaim is immediate. But some critics, having seen dozens of promising performers whose potential is ignored, can be embittered that others, often less talented, become stars thanks to publicity or money.

With Mr Helfgott, they miss the point. Mental breakdown was not a publicity stunt, nor was his return to the concert hall a claim to be a great performer. He is a man who has not fully escaped the terrors of mental instability but who can keep the demons at bay through music. The link between the two is, sadly, common: John Ogdon was engaged in a lifelong struggle against mental imbalance; Van Cliburn, a child prodigy, became a recluse at the height of his fame; and Horowitz, in his long career, was as racked in his mind as he was gifted in his fingers. Mr Helfgott, with the loving support of his wife and friends, has achieved a balance that is an inspiration in life, as in the film, to others less gifted but equally afflicted. His reply to the critics is as devastating as it is serene: "Mustn't be so serious. It's all a game. Must be grateful."

## High indignation on Hogg tidings

From Dr R. J. Landen

Sir, Messrs Hogg, Soames and the Earl Howe might do well to bear in mind the behaviour of Sir Thomas Dugdale, at one time Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

His was not a matter involving either the health of the general population or of the Armed Forces. Rather it concerned Criche Down, a piece of farmland which had been compulsorily purchased by his ministry, and which had not been returned to its former owner when the ministry had finished with it.

A minor matter might suppose, which has been badly mishandled by the Civil Service, and of which Sir Thomas had no knowledge. Nonetheless on July 19, 1954 (report, July 21, 1954), he wrote to his Prime Minister: In view of the criticisms which have been levelled at the handling of the Criche Down case, for which as Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries I accept responsibility, I have come to the conclusion that I must ask you to submit my resignation to the Queen.

Have the greatly inflated salaries now paid to ministers led to the abolition of the concept of ministerial responsibility?

Yours etc,  
R. J. LANDEN,  
7 Weald Rise,  
Tilghurst, Reading, Berkshire.  
March 7.

From Lieutenant-Colonel T. Rigby,  
Royal Signals (ret)

Sir, Is it not surprising that the conclusions of a report, rather than plain common sense, are needed to convince those responsible for standards of animals entering abattoirs that the animals should be clean?

Yours faithfully,  
T. RIGBY,  
Fairfield House, Millbrook Way,  
Orleton, Ludlow, Shropshire.  
March 7.

From Dr Hugh Saxton

Sir, Is it not now clear that there is an urgent need for a Freedom of Information Act so that ministers can have access to information otherwise known only to their civil servants?

Yours faithfully,  
H. M. SAXTON,  
Ash House, Houghton Road,  
Stockbridge, Hampshire.  
March 7.

## Test ban treaty

From the Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Sir, On Monday the Government admitted in a written answer that the legislation promised in the Queen's Speech to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (report, October 24, 1996) will not now be introduced in this parliamentary session.

There was no explanation and no apology. A ratification Bill would be unopposed and take up the minimum of parliamentary time. Ratification is not an unknown process. Nor was the need for such a Bill unexpected.

It is important that Britain, as a nuclear weapons state, is seen to act with some sense of urgency. This country's record on nuclear disarmament issues continues to be one of grudging obstruction. What has caused this latest delay?

Yours faithfully,  
DAVE KNIGHT,  
Chair, CND,  
162 Holloway Road, N7.  
March 6.

## Bank and Parliament

From Viscount Exmouth

Sir, Mr Leolin Price's articulate assessment of the role of an independent Bank of England or UK central bank (letter March 3) fails to observe that such a body would, under the terms of the Maastricht treaty, be answerable to the European central bank in Frankfurt, and likewise our Parliament would be answerable to the European Parliament, thereby losing all contact with their electors.

Surely Mr Price must have identified numerous directives emanating from Brussels which are "not compatible with our constitutional arrangements?"

Yours faithfully,  
PAUL EXMOUTH,  
House of Lords.

## Export earnings

From Mr Bill Kearns

Sir, There is always a danger that a quoted statistic becomes an accepted fact. Before this happens we have some evidence for the National Audit Office's suggestion (report, March 4) that every pound spent on trade promotion in the Far East last year earned £78 in exports. I spent more than 20 years in the Diplomatic Service, most of the time doing commercial work, and I do not believe the statistic.

There is a worthwhile role for diplomats to provide assistance to exporters but the case for commercial diplomacy being adequately funded is not enhanced by the use of such silly statistics.

Yours etc,  
BILL KEARNS,  
11 Court Royal Mews,  
Northlands Road, Southampton.  
March 4.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Albania's needs in present crisis

From Miss Primrose Peacock

Sir, Whilst agreeing wholeheartedly with your leader today, "Albania aflame", it is worth pointing out that Albania has had numerous non-governmental friends during the past six years.

Currently over 90 British charities, including some household names, are running Albanian projects in addition to those organised by academic institutions, cultural and religious bodies, etc. A few businesses have made valiant efforts to establish an Albanian base.

However, a major stumbling block has been official British indifference, bureaucratic delay and the wastage of scarce resources on window dressing. A sharp contrast to the 1930s when Britain played a leading role in assisting Albania, and even trained the gendarmes.

If only a small fraction of the funding and expertise that has been poured into former Yugoslavia since 1991 had been made available to the Albanians, who are generally pro-British, we might not now be seeing the current tragedy.

Yours sincerely,  
PRIMROSE PEACOCK  
(Editor, *Besa*, for friends of Albania),  
PO Box 155, Taunton TA2 8YW.  
March 3.

From Mr Johnathan Sunley

Sir, I cannot agree with the picture you paint of Albanian President Sali Berisha cracking down in neo-Stalinist fashion on his country's news media (leading article, "Albania's Press", March 5).

Since the declaration of a state of emergency at the weekend, it is true that the only newspaper to have appeared daily is the one closest to the ruling Democratic Party. Still, other papers which might be less friendly towards the Government but which are prepared nonetheless to carry official statements are not prevented from being published. This is attested by the regular appearance of the English-language *Albanian Daily News*, the predominantly pro-rebel articles of which are eagerly awaited by the international correspondents present in

Tirana, whose own newspapers continue to arrive in the country's capital each day.

As for interruptions to the broadcasting of electronic media, it is again true that both Euronews and the BBC Albanian Service were briefly taken off the air before being restored. The majority of Albanians we have talked to, however, have expressed bewilderment at the tendentious reporting of these two organisations. Euronews, for example, recently claimed that Albanians had been reduced to selling blood to make up for their pyramid scheme losses.

There is no comparison between the measures being taken by today's armed forces or secret police with those of their communist-era counterparts. Albania's then dictator, Enver Hoxha, was unable to tolerate private cars or even shoulder-length hair — let alone alternative political parties and an elected parliament.

Sincerely,  
JOHNATHAN SUNLEY,  
British Helsinki Human Rights Group,  
c/o Hotel Miniri, Tirana.  
March 6.

From the Executive Director of Children's Aid Direct

Sir, The collapse of civil order in the south of Albania has much deeper causes than the pyramid scandals which have acted as the trigger. The democratic system, elections, banking and indeed leadership are in a fledgling state. The economy is artificial and both the Government and people are challenged with tasks well beyond their resources and experience. What Albania needs is investment in knowledge, education and social welfare, and only we can offer this.

Ironically we are even now staring at an opportunity rather than a threat, but one that calls for a direct response in investment, aid, skills and expertise.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID H. W. GRUBB,  
Executive Director,  
Children's Aid Direct,  
82 Caversham Road,  
Reading, Berkshire.

## Real scale of child prostitution

From Mr Barry Sheerman,  
MP for Huddersfield (Labour)

Sir, I was surprised to read in your report of March 3, the view of a former president of the Association of Directors of Social Services that charities were exaggerating the incidence of child prostitution in this country.

As a parliamentarian who has been attempting for some time to draw attention to what appears to be a serious problem involving the manipulation, control and abuse of children, I find Mr Sequeira's views very much at odds with information I have gathered from the police, university researchers and grassroots social workers.

I have no doubt that there is a serious matter for concern here, which affects, at the very least, most of our large cities. Surely what is now needed is a proper evaluation, to be carried

out by the police, social services and the voluntary sector, as to the precise extent of the problem, speedily followed by appropriate steps to protect children from this particularly unpleasant form of child sexual abuse.

Some directors of social work may protest, but there is not a little evidence to suggest that too few of them have either recognised the problem or organised their service to do something constructive about it.

It is my belief that there is a very significant number of children being exploited and abused in this way by unscrupulous individuals and that the voluntary sector should be congratulated on conducting serious work in this area.

Yours faithfully,  
BARRY SHEERMAN,  
House of Commons.  
March 3.

## Vandals at work

From the Rector of St Peter's,  
Waltham

Sir, The desecration of the tomb of Sir John Scane (report and photograph, March 5) should cause little surprise. As rector of one of his two church buildings which remain in use as parish churches (the other being St John's, Bethnal Green), we are fighting a losing battle against vandals.

In the last year we have been forced to close the outer doors of our building, which have formerly been open to allow people to view the inside of the church through the glass interior doors. Casual break-ins produced little theft but much damage. Closing the doors has stopped entry, but now they, whoever they are, have started

on the exterior. Extensive graffiti have appeared on the stonework of the north side.

In the case of the tomb the cause of the desecration was theft: here in Waltham, it appears simply to be destruction or despoliation of a building clearly held of little account by the vandals concerned.

On your front page today (later editions) the headline "Tory MP savages friend and foe" illustrates the casual verbal damage which seems acceptable when we disagree with something, or hold it in low esteem. I wonder if there is a link between the two?

Yours faithfully,  
GORDON MURRAY,  
The Rectory,  
Liverpool Grove, SE17.  
March 5.

## Surname usage

From Sir Anthony Kershaw

Sir, In the matter of how one should address other British men (letters, February 8, 18, 20, 22, 25, March 3) the old practice was clear.

One's social equals, and fellow members of a closed society such as the Bar, House of Commons, gentlemen's clubs, etc. one addressed by surname, and one did not shake hands. Members of the working class, eg. gardeners, butlers, porters, etc. — also by surname.

Others were "Mr" in speech, "Esq" in writing, and one always shook hands. All that is stuff and nonsense today. Everyone is "Esq". Esquire used to be a rank; only those whose father held the rank of Major or equivalent were entitled to use it. But woe betide the MP who uses plain "Mr" when writing to constituents.

Nuwardays the computer has reduced the whole thing to total chaos anyway.

I beg to remain, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
ANTHONY KERSHAW  
(Conservative MP for Stroud, 1955-87),  
West Barn, Didmaston,  
Badminton, Gloucestershire.  
March 4.

## Bishop's decision to marry divorcee

From the Reverend J. C. Brooks

Sir, In your report (March 4) of the Bishop of Birmingham's controversial intention to marry a divorcee, the lady's first husband is referred to as a "retired GP". Retired or not from medicine, he is also an Anglican priest, living in the Diocese of Birmingham, who has not remarried.

Quite apart from the desirability, or otherwise, of the Bishop's action from the point of view of ecclesiastical discipline (the Reverend de Berry's letter, March 5), a further question should perhaps be considered — how does this action affect the relationship of the Bishop with one of his priests who is the first husband of his intended wife?

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN BROOKS,  
Milbank,  
3 Mill Road, Deal, Kent.  
March 5.

From the Vicar of Houghton Regis

Sir, Mr Steve Jenkins, apparently a spokesman "for the Church of England" (report, March 4), tells us that there is nothing in canon law to prevent the proposed remarriage between the Lord Bishop of Birmingham and a lady whose first marriage has had its legal form dissolved at civil law but whose husband is still living.

But that is to read canon law as though it were like secular coercive regulation.

The point is surely that the Lord Bishop, at his consecration, declared that he would "strive to fashion his own life and that of his household according to the way of Christ". The Church of England still accepts the Western Catholic understanding that the marriage bond can be dissolved only upon death of one of the parties (not when people claim that the marriage has "died") and this is reflected in her canon law.

To sidestep canon law by "marrying" in a register office is not quite what the flock would hope for from one of Christ's undershepherds, but increasingly in these troubled days, precisely what we come to expect.

Yours faithfully,  
JONATHAN REDVERS HARRIS,  
The Vicarage,  
Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire.  
March 4.

## Mops ahoy

From Professor Alec Eden

Sir, It was with considerable interest that I read of the six Scottish cleaning ladies who went to sea with the destroyer *HMS Newcastle* "to carry out general duties in the galley and dining hall" (report, March 5).

When I served in 1952 as an Ordinary Seaman in the last *HMS Newcastle*, a City-class cruiser in the Korean War, we did not have cleaning ladies. Neither did we have a dining hall. We ate, slept, relaxed and did almost everything else in the same somewhat confined space.

It was called — not inappropriately — the mess deck.

Yours faithfully,  
ALEC EDEN,  
The Thatched House,  
20 Mead Road, Torquay, Devon.  
March 5.

## High table

From Mr Allen Scott

Sir, Philip Howard's "Word-watching" (March 4) gives the definition of *Fu-Fu* as "a kind of dough made out of plantains". My understanding was that *Fu-Fu* was made from flour derived from corn or cassava, or more commonly from boiled and pounded yam, and was normally the partner of soups or stews.

As long-time "Coasters", resident in Nigeria, we served it with groundnut stew and tested the quality of the *Fu-Fu* by tossing a small sample in the air to the ceiling.

If it stuck to the ceiling it passed the test and was fit to eat.

Yours faithfully,  
ALLEN SCOTT,  
Christmas Pie House,  
Green Lane East, Christmas Pie,  
Nr Guildford, Surrey.  
March 4.

## All over the place

From Mr Harry Ganz

Sir, I must congratulate the Post Office on its most recent attempts to make a delivery. Last October, I posted a large packet (clearly labelled) to the correct address in Mayfair, W.1., stamped with a 70p stamp.

The packet never arrived, because the Post Office, in its wisdom, took W.1. to be the West Indies. On its arrival in the West Indies, the postal authorities there discovered that there was no such place as Mayfair, and promptly redispached it to Wisconsin.

My packet, rather the worse for wear, was returned to me yesterday by the Post Office, still unable to find Mayfair, W.1.

Yours faithfully,  
HARRY GANZ,  
The Garden Pharmacy,  
119 Long Acre, WC2.  
March 6.

Weekend Money letters, page 38

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.





## COURT CIRCULAR

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**  
March 7: His Excellency Mr Norman Penke was received in audience by the Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Republic of Latvia to the Court of St James's.

Mrs Penke was also received by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs was present. The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, today carried out a field visit with the White and Dolphin Society of Oman. This evening His Royal Highness was received at the Palace by Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said, Sultan of Oman.

March 7: The Duke of York, Prince, this evening attended the Royal Household Golf Society Annual Dinner at Twickenham Rugby Football Ground, Middlesex.

March 7: The Prince Edward, Trustee, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International, today attended a meeting with the Chairman of the Congressional Award before attending a Duke of Edinburgh's Award World Fellowship Luncheon at the Union Club, New York.

## Royal engagements

**TODAY:** The Princess Royal, as President of Save the Children Fund, will attend the West Midlands appeal gala dinner and dance at the international Convention Centre, Birmingham, at 7.15.

## Roy Bennett

A memorial service for Roy Crissell Bennett, CMC, TD, will be held at St James's Church, Piccadilly on Tuesday, March 18, 1997 at 2.30pm.

## Mr L.P. Dutton

A Memorial Service for the life of Mr L.P. Dutton, MA, MBE, will be held in Giggleswick School Chapel on Saturday, March 22, 1997, at 2.30pm.

This afternoon His Royal Highness travelled to Lewisham, West Virginia, and this evening attended a Duke of Edinburgh's Award World Fellowship Dinner at the Greenbrier Hotel, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia.

March 7: The Princess Royal this morning opened the Midlands Engineering Centre, Cambridge Street, Birmingham, for the Institution of Electrical Engineers, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of West Midlands (Mr Robert Taylor).

Her Royal Highness this afternoon opened the new Design and Engineering Centre at the Rover Group Research Centre, Gaydon, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire (Mr Martin Durrell).

**ST JAMES'S PALACE**  
March 7: The Prince of Wales this morning arrived at Royal Air Force Brize Norton from Saudi Arabia. Lieutenant-Commander John Law very RN and Miss Sandy Henney were in attendance.

**KENT HOUSE**  
March 7: The Duke of Kent, President, the Royal Institution of Great Britain, this evening attended a Discourse given by Professor Robin Clark, at Albanian Street, London W1.

## School news

## Harrow School

**1997 Scholarships**  
The following awards have been made:

Scholarships: M.C. Leslie (Calcutt), M.H. Lawrence (Calcutt), M.H. Lawrence (Calcutt), J. Friedman (Pappalardo). Exhibitions: A.H.W. Crawley (Calcutt), J.H.W. Stewart (Tower House).

Music Scholarships: J.G.R. Dashiwood (Westbourne House), M.H. Lawrence (Calcutt), M.H. Lawrence (Calcutt), M.H. Lawrence (Calcutt), J. Friedman (Pappalardo).

Music Exhibitions: A.M. Lee-Cox (St John's College, South Africa), B.W. Kitchin (Westbourne House), Art Scholarship: S. Datta (The Hall).

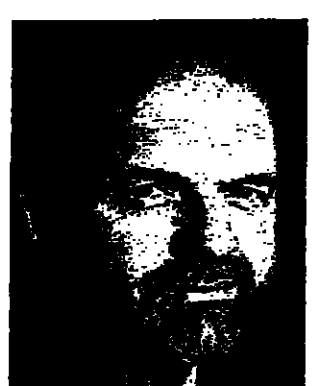
## Riddlesworth Hall School

Mr David Dean, currently at Le Rosey, Switzerland, will take up his appointment as Head of Riddlesworth Hall School in September 1997.

## Weekend birthdays

**TODAY:** Major-General Sir Christopher Airy, royal equerry, 63; Mr Nicolas Bevan, Speaker's Secretary, 55; Mrs Sylvia Bevan, 54; Mr John Golding, trade unionist, 66; Major-General J.P. Groom, former director-general, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, 68; Mr Neil Hamilton, MP, 48; Professor Sir Donald Harrison, 72; Mr Paul Edwards, 46; Mr Michael Grade, chief executive, Channel 4, 54; the Hon Douglas Hurd, CH, MP, 67; Mr Michael Inchbold, designer, 77; Miss Ann Jenner, ballerina, 55; Mr Irel Mushamedov, ballet dancer, 37; Miss Lynn Redgrave, actress, 54; Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, 49; Miss Lynn Seymour, ballerina, 55; Professor S.K. Smith, obstetrician and gynaecologist, 46; Professor Norman Stone, modern historian, 56; the Ven P.R. Turner, Chaplain-in-Chief, RAF, 55; Mr John Ward, MP, 72; Mr David Wilde, swimmer, 43.

**TOMORROW:** Air Marshal Sir Robert Austin, 57; Mr Bill Beaumont, sports broadcaster and



Robert Tear, the tenor, is 58 today

writer, 45; Mr Andrew Bennett, MP, 58; Dr M.C. Brock, former war correspondent, 70; Mr George Windor, 77; Mr André Courrèges, fashion designer, 74; Mr Herbert Courts, Head of Museums and Galleries, City of Edinburgh Council, 53; the Hon Sir Rousley

Cunningham-Bruce, former Lord Justice of Appeal, and his twin brother Lord Thurlow, 55; Mr Bobby Fischer, chess player, 54; Mr John Golding, trade unionist, 66; Major-General J.P. Groom, former director-general, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, 68; Mr Neil Hamilton, MP, 48; Professor Sir Donald Harrison, 72; Mr Paul Edwards, 46; Mr Michael Grade, chief executive, Channel 4, 54; the Hon Douglas Hurd, CH, MP, 67; Mr Michael Inchbold, designer, 77; Miss Ann Jenner, ballerina, 55; Mr Irel Mushamedov, ballet dancer, 37; Miss Lynn Redgrave, actress, 54; Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, 49; Miss Lynn Seymour, ballerina, 55; Professor S.K. Smith, obstetrician and gynaecologist, 46; Professor Norman Stone, modern historian, 56; the Ven P.R. Turner, Chaplain-in-Chief, RAF, 55; Mr John Ward, MP, 72; Mr David Wilde, swimmer, 43.

## Service dinners

**Royal Marines**  
Major-General John Hardy presided at the annual dinner of the Royal Marines Officers' Dinner Club held last night at Lincoln's Inn. Sir Maurice Drake, Major-General Dennis Shaw, the Rev David Burgess and Captain Malcolm Curver, RN, were among the guests.

**The Red Rose Club**  
Officers of the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry dined out Major General Sir Michael Palmer, KCVO, and held their annual Red Rose Dinner on Friday at Kearsley House, Wigan. Brigadier E.C.W. Morrison, Honorary Colonel, presided. Major General J.P.W. Friedberger, Colonel P.A. Clare and representatives of the Lancashire Regiment, the Duke of Lancaster, HMS Lancaster, the Kings Royal Hussars, the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment were among those present.

**RAF St Athan**  
Air Chief Marshal Sir John Alliston, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Logistics Command, and Lady Alliston were the guests of honour at the St David's Day (March 1) ladies night held last night at RAF St Athan. Wing Commander John Sneller presided. Group Captain the Rev J. Thomas, Logistics Command Chaplain, was the guest speaker.

**Air Commodore Peter Scott**  
Air Commodore Peter Scott was presented with the Air Force Cross by the Queen on Friday at Kearsley House, Wigan. Brigadier E.C.W. Morrison, Honorary Colonel, presided. Major General J.P.W. Friedberger, Colonel P.A. Clare and representatives of the Lancashire Regiment, the Duke of Lancaster, HMS Lancaster, the Kings Royal Hussars, the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment were among those present.

**RAF Cranwell**  
Group Captain L. Robins presided at a reunion dinner of past and present officers of No 1 Maritime Headquarters Unit (Royal Auxiliary Air Force) and their ladies held last night at Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea. Air Commodore Hon. Sir Peter Vaneck, Group Captain P. Harris, Wing Commander E. Partridge and Major A. Blackburn, RAMC(N), were among the guests.

**University of Birmingham Air Squadron**  
Vice-Admiral I.D.G. Garnier, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, presided at the annual dinner of the University of Birmingham Air Squadron held last night at RAF Cranwell. Squadron Leader C. Cronin, Commanding Officer, presided.

## Anniversaries

**TODAY**  
BIRTHS: Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, composer, Weimar, Germany, 1734; Richard Howe, 1st Earl of Howe, 1731; Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*, Edinburgh, 1859; Frederic William Gould, typographer, Bloomington, Illinois, 1865.

DEATHS: King William III, reigned with Mary II 1689-40, then James II, 1702; Abraham Darby, iron founder, Worcester, 1717; Hector Berlioz, composer, Paris, 1869; Henry Ward Beecher, preacher, Brookline, Massachusetts, 1887; John Ericsson, pioneer of the screw propeller, New York, 1889; Ferdinand von Zeppelin, airship constructor, Charlottenburg, Germany, 1917; Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor, London, 1961; Harold Lloyd, film comedian, Beverly Hills, 1971; Richard Austen Butler, politician, Great Yarmouth, 1982; Sir William Walton, composer, Ischia, 1983.

Accession of Queen Anne (reigned until 1714), 1702. The February revolution began in Russia (ending on March 14), these dates being in the New Style Gregorian calendar, 1917. American Marines landed in Vietnam, 1965. An artificial heart was used for the

first time on a 41-year-old man which kept him alive for 80 minutes, 1952.

**TOMORROW**  
BIRTHS: Amerigo Vesputti, explorer, Florence, 1451; William Cobbett, essayist and politician, Farnham, Surrey, 1763; Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, 1945; Vyacheslav Molotov, statesman, Kuzkaid, Vyatka, 1890; Victoria Jackville-West, novelist and biographer, Knole Castle, Kent, 1892; Samuel Barber, composer, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1910; Yuri Gagarin, first astronaut, USSR, 1934; Vladimir Smolenskiy, 1881; Vyacheslav Molotov, statesman, Kuzkaid, Vyatka, 1890; Victoria Jackville-West, novelist and biographer, Knole Castle, Kent, 1892; Samuel Barber, composer, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1910; Yuri Gagarin, first astronaut, USSR, 1934; Vladimir Smolenskiy, 1881; Vyacheslav Molotov, statesman, Kuzkaid, Vyatka, 1890; Victoria Jackville-West, novelist and biographer, Knole Castle, Kent, 1892; Samuel Barber, composer, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1910; Yuri Gagarin, first astronaut, USSR, 1934; Vladimir Smolenskiy, 1881; Vyacheslav Molotov, statesman, Kuzkaid, Vyatka, 1890; Victoria Jackville-West, novelist and biographer, Knole Castle, Kent, 1892; 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## OBITUARIES

## MICHAEL MANLEY

Michael Manley, PC, Prime Minister of Jamaica, 1972-80, and 1989-92, died yesterday in Kingston, Jamaica, aged 72. He was born in St Andrew, Jamaica, on December 10, 1924.

Three times elected Prime Minister of an independent Jamaica, Michael Manley was initially a hardline socialist, who forged close links with Fidel Castro and was a champion of the Non-Aligned Movement. But his electoral defeat by the conservative Edward Seaga in 1980 changed his perception of what was likely to be good for his country.

By the time he faced up to re-election in 1989, the rhetoric had changed completely, abandoned along with the Castro-esque bush jacket. Private investment and good relations with the US were now on the agenda. With the economy in poor shape he trounced Seaga to gain a third term as Jamaica's Prime Minister. Charismatic, tall and handsome, he was often called "Joshua" after the Old Testament prophet.

Michael Norman Manley came from a dynasty of artistic and political talent. His father, Norman Washington Manley, was the first Prime Minister of Jamaica before independence, and the founder of the People's National Party (PNP). The founder and leader of the rival Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) William Alexander Clarke, better known as Alexander Bustamante, was a cousin.

His mother, Edna Manley, was a sculptor of international renown. His father Norman was to become one of the most distinguished barristers in the Caribbean. Both became committed, in the Depression of the 1930s, which hit Jamaica very hard, to the struggle for workers' rights and for universal suffrage.

Michael Manley was educated at a leading school of the island, Jamaica College, in Kingston. His parents' influence was deep and all-round and guided his interest in music (Manley was passionately fond of classical music), art, literature and politics.

In 1943 Manley left Jamaica College and, like so many other middle-class West Indian young men, volunteered for service as a seaman — in his case with the Royal Canadian Air Force. He did not like Canada (he was in Quebec, and rebelled against the then bigoted Catholicism of

the province) and arrived in London in late 1945 to study at the London School of Economics. He went little to classes, but attended some lectures. Most time was spent at art galleries, and at the Wigmore and Albert Halls. He found his economic textbooks dry and dull and withdrew for a year to the fishing village of St Agnes in Cornwall to read literature and study Latin.

He then returned to the LSE, where he fell under the spell of Harold Laski, whose student, in the Department of Government, he became. He always considered Laski's teaching a model thereafter.

Following his graduation in economics he did some work as a freelance journalist in London, both for *The Observer* and *The BBC Overseas Service*. He returned to Jamaica in December 1951, to work as a journalist on the weekly *Public Opinion*, and from 1952 to 1972 as a trade union organiser.

Like so many other aspects of Jamaican life, by that time the union movement was polarised between the supporters of the People's National Party whose labour arm was the National Workers' Union (NLU) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and its Bustamante Industrial Trades Union (BITU).

Manley found, as he recorded in his book *A Voice From the Workplace*, a society where "class relations were stark in their intolerance. There was no subtlety, and little mobility because a man's class was stamped upon his skin as much as upon his clothes. To middle-class eyes the working classes were an opaque mass — without individuality and without rights — because they were without humanity."

Manley went everywhere around the island with a loudspeaker van. He began to develop his extraordinary powers of oratory. Later, in the 1970s, there were many who thought he got carried away by them, and said things which he would later regret.

In the Jamaica of the resonant word, a society where the sonorities of the King James Bible continue to be appreciated — Rastafarians will read no other version of the Old Testament — his cast of mind combined culture and politics at a fundamental level. At a strike at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC), during the period from 1962 to 1972 of a JLP Government, Manley and the NWU demonstrated outside the JBC. Speaking to his followers, Manley pointed



to the building: "There are the walls of Jericho". From one in the crowd came the response: "It Joshua who speaks!"

From then on, he was, effectively, Joshua, a notion which served him marvellously when he succeeded his father in February 1969 as president and leader of the PNP (his father had been terminally ill since October the previous year).

A month later he stated his programme to the party conference. He said it was a search for equality which widespread

unemployment denied. It was for true national independence, which meant wresting the commanding heights of the economy from foreign control. There must be the politics of participation, at all levels, for both sexes, and corruption must be eliminated from the electoral system. Above all, there must be a sense of national identity.

But Manley failed to adequately comprehend that, aided by the breakdown of traditional values seen all over the world, a particularly violent strain of evil was

brewing in Kingston's terrible slums. Jamaica did try to respond to his message. It was, so many felt, time to break the mould and to build a new society based on the realities of Jamaica as it was for the masses. His successful 1972 election campaign was a personal triumph for Joshua and for his Rod of Correction" with 56 per cent of the votes cast and 37 out of the 53 seats in the House of Representatives.

Manley at first began rather conventionally, but as he moved in to implement his programme he met a determined resistance from the traditional managerial class in Jamaica. The Government began to spend massively in work-creating programmes and it became plain that although Manley was a wonderful inspirer he was not one for the details of government.

His critics, who were increasing, were to say that if he defined a problem he would think he had solved it. But Manley saw things in a world context. He was wanting to see a new world economic order established, and he had a vision about Jamaica and the developing world in general, unrealistic though it might have been.

In his Cabinet and among advisers were old friends of an often more conventional and gradualist turn of mind. But in the 1960s radical Black Power and leftist ideology had created a power base within the academics of the University of the West Indies at Mona near Kingston, the capital. They found allies among some of the activists in the PNP, and soon in parliament and Cabinet. Some were to move in on the ministries and special agencies that Manley created, often wearing Afro-type clothes and Rastafarian-style knitted, multicoloured caps or tams (they were wittily dubbed the "Tampacks" by some Jamaicans). They were to make civil servants' lives a misery and generally added to the administrative confusion.

Manley was goaded and led by his ready and witty tongue to appeal to Jamaican pride and nationalism by slogans such as "we are not for sale". His people responded rapturously, and in 1976 he again scored a huge victory at the polls, with 56.8 per cent of the votes.

It appeared to be a massive vote of support for the PNP and its programme of democratic socialism, but severe economic deterioration set in. Both Manley's and Jamaica's pride resisted the

ultimate solution — an IMF-imposed economic programme. There were cut-backs. The poor, the workers and the women suffered, as the work creation programmes and the public payrolls were cut. Many items of food, particularly imported staples, disappeared from shops and supermarkets.

The IMF and the CIA were blamed for the sea of troubles which now engulfed Jamaica. Washington and Kingston were often at loggerheads, largely because of Manley's warm relations with Fidel Castro. But Cuba was Jamaica's nearest neighbour and Manley refused to condemn Cuba for its armed support of the liberation struggle in southern Africa, particularly in Angola.

In February 1980 it was found impossible to reach a new agreement with the IMF, and the Government prepared for an election as soon as the new register was ready. In March 1980 an election was called, the bloodiest in Jamaica's history. It included the murder for the first time of a parliamentary candidate. The murder rate for that year went unsurpassed until 1996.

After that defeat, there were eight years of JLP rule. Manley's mother Edna died in 1987, and in that year he fell severely ill with diverticulitis. But the polls from 1985 onwards had favoured the PNP. Manley was considered — as he was — a humane, likeable man, with immense sympathy for the underdog and the worker.

On February 9, 1988, he was returned to power. He now presented himself as a moderate, though energetic, reformer advocating a limited government involvement in the economy which was to be led by the private sector. Much in the state sector was set down for privatisation. Not for nothing had Manley written: "I am grateful that God has given me the kind of mind that does not assume that what I thought I knew yesterday was an eternal guarantee of truth."

In March 1992 he resigned in office, being succeeded by the present Prime Minister, J. P. Patterson, who has carried on with these policies. Manley struggled with prostate cancer, which was diagnosed six years ago, and though it was kept in check for a while by radiation treatment, he eventually died at home.

Manley was five times married. He leaves a widow, Glynne Ewart, whom he married in 1992. From his marriages he had five children, three daughters and two sons.

## PHILIP POLLOCK

Philip Pollock, entrepreneur, died on February 15 aged 70. He was born on June 20, 1926.

ENTREPRENEUR and bon vivant, Philip Pollock loved working with, and backing, creative people. He had a flair for detecting coming things and ample means for the fostering of them. As a businessman he was enthusiastic, affable, frank and insightful, with dedicated employees.

Philip Samuel Pollock was born in London and educated at Canford. His father, also something of an entrepreneur, was the owner of several pubs, a greyhound track and the cinema at Marble Arch. With a boyish passion for the cinema, Pollock left school at 16 in order to work as a clapper-boy at Ealing Studios. He did his war service in the Fleet Air Arm where, with an eye on Ealing, he joined the Film Unit.

On being demobbed he returned to Ealing. His mother thought the film world unsuitable and bought her son the company Best Tyres. By the mid-1950s the company had become one of the largest tyre chains in southern England. Pollock sold out to Kennings and became today's equivalent of a multi-millionaire.

He was now able to give his creative side a free rein. He set up his own furniture company, Aeroform, making bespoke furniture to his own



Pollock with his wife Venetia in the 1935 Auburn Speedster

designs and introducing one of the best-loved icons of the early 1960s — the sag-bag.

In 1962 his love of vintage cars led to the creation, with Edward Montagu (Lord Montagu of Beaulieu), of the still-thriving Vintage Tyre Supplies. Having cannily retained Best Tyre's vintage tyre division Pollock set about reviving the production by Dunlop and others of many tyre sizes that had been discontinued. Without his foresight institutions such as the London to Brighton Run would have come to an end.

In 1964, with Terence

Conran, Conran's wife Caroline and Pagan Taylor, he co-founded Habitat. At the same time he had an interest, briefly, in the running of The Establishment with Peter Cook and he supported Bernard and Laura Ashley with Boys, their first shop.

His early interests in entertainment were rekindled in the mid-1980s, when bids were invited for the franchise of an independent radio station in Portsmouth. His consortium, the first of its kind, was successful and Pollock became chairman of Ocean

Sound, a company that was later to grow into Southern Radio. He was also involved in the setting up of Lincs FM.

He was, however, a far from dedicated entrepreneur. Once a company became large, popular and successful, he lost interest. His own tremendous capacity for friendship sometimes affected his business acumen. He had, for example, an innocent (and misplaced) belief that a friend would never stab him in the back.

To many of his friends — and he was the most loyal of friends — he was the embodiment of Mr Toad. A big, ebullient, quick-tempered

man with a loud laugh and a childlike aptitude for pleasure, he displayed the wildest enthusiasm for fast cars and yachts, rich food, copious drink and too many cigarettes, fine furniture, entertainment, the visual arts and travel. It was while partying and night-clubbing as a young man with his oldest friend, the architect Bob Chapman, that he met many of the talented architects, illustrators and designers of the day.

In 1957 he married Venetia Brewis, a distinguished publishers' editor. Her career introduced him to the literary world where he made even more friends, among them biographers, political commentators and historians. He became the proud father of three children with a large, hospitable farmhouse near Lympington. He took a mooring on the Beaulieu River and commissioned the first yacht to be built at Bucklers Hard since the war — a wooden Folkboat called *Schiehallion*.

In 1977 he reached the peak of his sailing career by winning the Contessa Cup at Cowes with his appropriately named yacht, *Electric*.

His own eclecticism was reflected not only in the variety of businesses with which he was concerned, but also in the pictures he bought in 1988 for the Contemporary Art Society (and by his own collection in the books he read (he was, for a long time, the sci-fi reader for Faber) and lately in his interest in the dance theatre company, Adventures in Motion Pictures.

Although Philip Pollock's last years were marred by the sadly premature death of his wife, ruinous losses at Lloyd's and the cruel affliction of emphysema, his robust spirit, his gift for friendship and his supportive family saw to it that he was comforted, amused and rarely alone.

## MAURICE GOLDSMITH

Maurice Goldsmith, science writer, died on March 2 aged 83. He was born on July 15, 1913.

"CONVINCED that science was too interesting to be ignored and too important to be mismanaged, Maurice Goldsmith spent his life proselytising. He brought to the task the enthusiasm of the convert, for his degree from the London School of Economics had been in social sciences, which he found too lacking in rigour. He was attracted to physics in the 1930s and greatly influenced by the work of the crystallographer J. D. Bernal, whose book *The Social Function of Science* was published in 1939.

Maurice Goldsmith was born of Polish parents who had moved to London the year of his birth. His father was a master tailor and he was brought up in the Jewish faith in the East End. As a young man he held deep religious convictions, abandoned the day he stepped over the threshold of the LSE. Before the war he freelanced for various publications, including the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *East London Gazette*, but in 1939 was drafted into the War Office Selection Board, where he devised tests for selecting prospective officers.

In his spare time he worked at *Reynolds News*, then a successful Sunday newspaper with Labour convictions. After the war he became science correspondent of the weekly *Illustrated*, and with other first-generation science writers — including Ritchie Calder of the *New Chronicle*, J. G. Crowther of the *Manchester Guardian*, and Arthur Haslett of *The Times* — founded in 1947 the Association of British Science Writers.

Like others, he discovered that popularising science did not necessarily make it popular. Science writers could alert the public, set agendas and provide materials for imaginative play, he later wrote, but could not be relied upon to transmit the essence of science. For a while he became a science teacher in a secondary school, before joining the then Department of Natural Sciences at Unesco in Paris as science editor. He wrote articles that were distributed around the world in many languages, helped to set up an association of French science writers, and launched the Unesco journal *Impact of Science on Society*. He persuaded the Indian industrialist B. Patnaik to provide funds for the Kalininga Prize for Science Writing, still awarded today.

In the mid-1950s, he presented the first-ever science programme on commercial television, a weekly half-hour for ATV called *Meet the Professor*. In a tiny studio in the West End he conducted interviews with leading scientists as they boiled under the lights. But his long-term interest was not so much the content of science, but how it could best be organised for human welfare. Until the early 1960s little attempt had been



made to plan science strategically. "The hard fact is that we are colossally ignorant," he wrote in *The Times* in 1966. "The methods of science have not been used to study the processes of science itself. We let science grow wildly, so that it progresses inefficiently and its rate of advance is distorted."

In 1964 Goldsmith had published with Alan Mackay a book called *The Science of Science*, establishing the same year the Science of Science Foundation — later the Science Policy Foundation — of which he became director. His genius for networking provided the foundation with a distinguished committee of management and it made many contributions towards a better understanding of how to manage science. Introducing a lecture by Goldsmith at the Royal Society of Arts in 1967, C. P. Snow said: "Goldsmith is one of those characters, far too rare in any society, who act as a creative influence. Most people don't know the innumerable things he has started all over the field of science, as a labour of love quite unrecognised by society."

Goldsmith wrote or edited many books, including biographies of Joseph Needham and J. D. Bernal, and in 1986 published *The Science Critic*, a call for a new kind of person who could act in science as critics do in art, film or music. He envisaged the science critic as a polymath, able to examine the progress of research and point to its likely implications, to act as a participant in ethical debates, and help the public to understand the poetry of scientific experience. In this way, Goldsmith hoped, the gap between Snow's two cultures might at last be bridged.

He leaves a wife, Anna, and one son.

## PERSONAL COLUMN

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## RACING

## A WONDERFUL DOUBLE

A year ago Miss Dorothy Paget won the two most important events of the afternoon, the Champion Hurdle and the Cheltenham Gold Cup, with Insurance and Golden Miller, trained for her by Briscoe and ridden by Leader. History repeated itself yesterday almost in detail, the only difference being that Stott was the rider in place of Leader. All concerned, and not least the horses, are to be congratulated on a very wonderful double, for it means that the two horses are the best hurdler and the best steeplechaser in training, just as they were a year ago. Briscoe is to be congratulated not only on having kept the two horses as good as they were a year ago but on having improved them. As Insurance's race came first it must be dealt with first, although the performance of Golden Miller was the greater in that it was the more easily gained. The pace at which the Champion Hurdle was run was slow for nearly a mile and a half, and it was not until the

## ON THIS DAY

March 8, 1933

Golden Miller, the greatest jumper between the wars, won the Grand National the following year, as well as the third of five consecutive Gold Cups, a record unlikely ever to be surpassed.

bottom turn of the course had been made that the speed became worthy of the race. All five starters were still close together, with Insurance just in front. He was soon joined by Indian Salmon, with Windermere Laddie close behind. Approaching the last hurdle Insurance was just in front of Windermere Laddie and Indian Salmon. The last-named was beaten as soon as the run-in was reached, but the other two fought out a fine duel to the winning post, with

Insurance always having just the better of the argument. There was a slightly larger field for the Gold Cup, a steeplechase run over three miles and three furlongs. It was won in the style of a great horse — at last he must be admitted to be that — by ten lengths from Thomond II, with Delaneige third and The Brown Talisman fourth. After Delaneige had made the running for rather more than two miles Golden Miller and Thomond II drew out, and for a short time galloped side by side. Golden Miller then drew away and, galloping with ease, resolution, and obvious enjoyment, went on by himself and in his glory to win without ever being challenged. He was not in the least distressed when he was led back to be unsaddled. Miss Paget led him in, quite properly proud of her horse, who had been received with much cheering on the course and from the Stands as he went, by himself, past the winning post. The cheering and clapping of hands were renewed when he came back to the paddock.







ARCH 8 1997  
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Naughty with  
spice: the  
car that  
breaks  
the rules  
Page 3

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Page 8



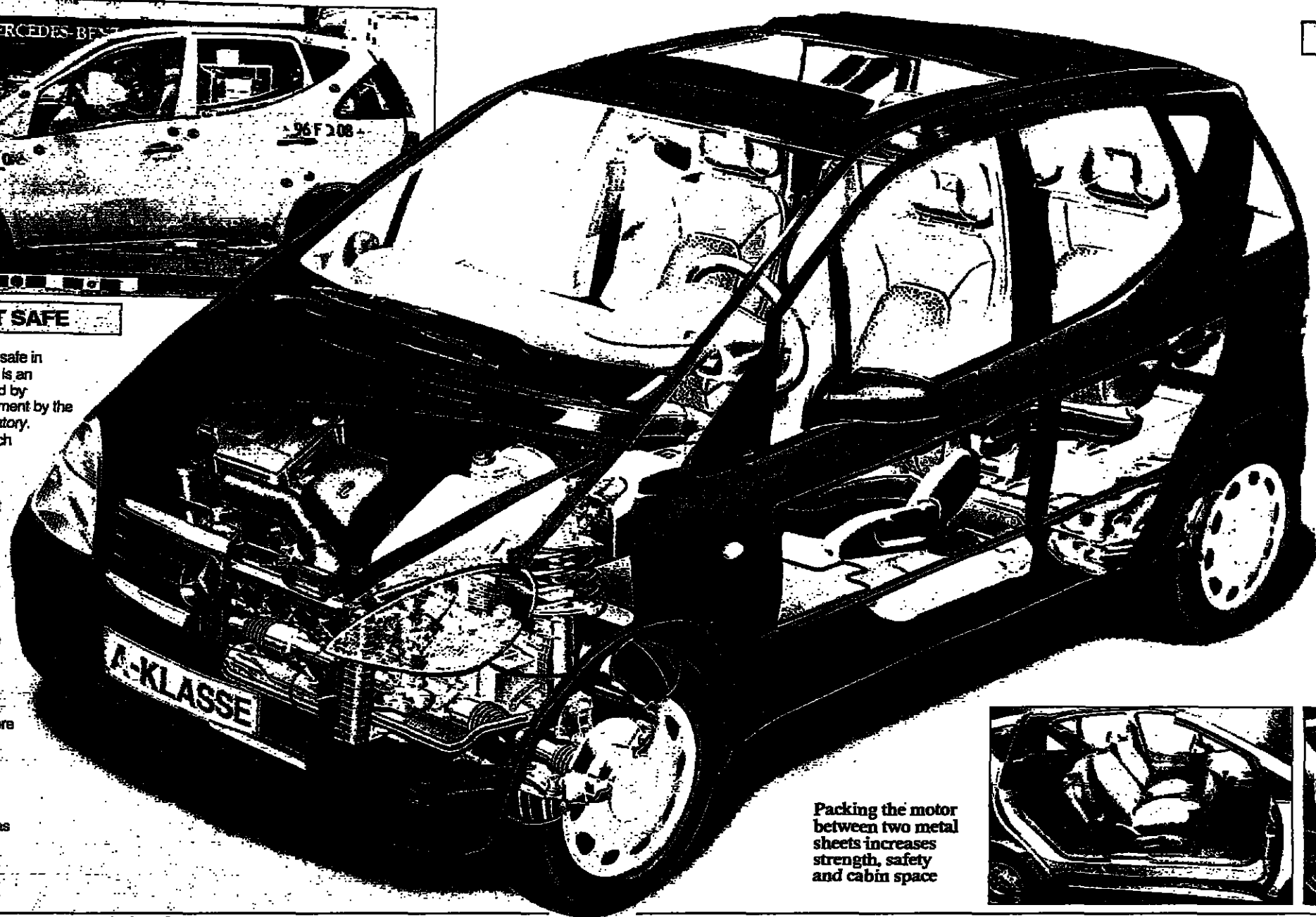
SATURDAY MARCH 8 1997

An engine sandwich lies at the heart of the new revolution in small car design, reports Kevin Eason



## BUT SAFE

**SMALL CARS** are less safe in a crash than big cars. That is an unpalatable fact, underlined by recent tests for the Government by the Transport Research Laboratory. Except for the A-class, which promises to be as safe as most of its bigger brother saloons and hatchbacks. Mini models suffer from not having a long bonnet so that, in a frontal impact, there is simply less metal to compress. But as the body absorbs the impact, the engine moves somewhere — usually into the cabin, wrecking the legs of the driver. Mercedes has solved that by moving the engine and strengthening the nose cone so that it has more strength and more ability to absorb an impact. The Germans claim that the A-class, smaller than a Ford Fiesta or Vauxhall Astra, offers the same protection as a Mercedes E-class saloon, judged one of the safest cars on the road.



Packing the motor between two metal sheets increases strength, safety and cabin space

## SPACE-RACE WINNER

**FLEXIBILITY** was the driving force for designers trying to offer big-car room in a baby-sized body. Most minis are cramped because the engine demands space at the front, and there is no room for manoeuvring an awkward load of shopping because the seats are fixed in place. The A-class is not hampered by such restrictions, for each passenger seat can be moved or even removed, leading to a claimed 72 different configurations. So back seats, even the front passenger seat, can disappear, while the absence of rear wheel arches to give a maximum baggage space of 1,700 litres — equivalent to a big estate car. Because the engine does not intrude into the passenger cabin, there is also maximum leg and elbow room. Mercedes claims the interior compartment is 1.83 metres long, as big as the passenger compartment in the C-class saloon, whose body is 90 centimetres longer.



# Mercedes ends a mini era

The first place you look is under the bonnet. Apart from exceptions like the Porsche-designed Volkswagen Beetle, the engine has been in the same place almost since the car first took to British roads a century ago. Flip open the bonnet of the Mercedes A-class, though, and the only thing staring back at you is the future — a future, in which the engine is more likely to be underneath than in front. For Mercedes has revolutionised the small car in almost the same way as Sir Alec Issigonis did when he designed the Mini. The Mini defined the packaging of a small car for almost four decades with its transversely mounted engine driving the front wheels, leaving clear interior space for four passengers in a box just 10ft long. As Sir Alec doodled his famous design, he did not have to worry about crash regulations which could make an engine in the front of a small car more of a liability than a bonus. Designers of modern small cars do though, and that is forcing a radical change in their thinking. There is no place in the new world of motoring for mini-sized minis. Little cars are going to be longer, fatter, heavier, more luxurious — and more expensive. The days of cheap and cheerful — when you opened the door of a Mini with a piece of wire — have gone forever. To be replaced by high-tech, high-style cars which might not be as long as a Rolls-Royce but look like a double-decker bus next to Sir Alec's original. Where the Mini crossed every boundary of class and income in the Sixties to become a motoring icon for everyone, Rover says its new Mini, due in the year 2000,

will be designed to be chic in New York, Tokyo and London but "not necessarily appealing to people in West Hartlepool". In other words, mini-cars are going upmarket — and the carmakers cannot help it. Customers will not tolerate a harsh and noisy ride, no matter how cute and quirky the car, which means that incredibly sophisticated ride and handling packages have been incorporated in the latest cars. But severe crash regulations have also necessitated huge investment to ensure that new minis are safe. The technology is expensive to develop but has prompted, in the case of the A-class, the biggest advance for years. In a front-on crash, the driver and passenger are only protected by the strength and "deformability" of the nose, in other words, the bonnet and front structure need to absorb and dissipate the impact long before it reaches the passenger cabin. That is the hardest trick to perform on a small car, simply because the nose is short and stubby, no more than a container for the engine. On impact, the engine is almost first in the firing line, no matter how big the bumpers and strong the beams designed to absorb the shock, and which run lengthways through the car. The chances are high that the engine will be smashed, like a tennis ball on a racquet, firing it towards the legs of the driver and passenger. In bigger cars, there is enough space in which to manage the impact; in a small car, you are virtually sitting with your feet right up against the engine.

Which set Mercedes' designers on their path to a unique idea, packaging the engine out of harm's way, yet still allowing the cabin to be free of intrusive gearbox or engine bulges. The designers made a sandwich, the top layer a floor that stretches from the throttle, clutch and brake pedals to the rear bumper, the bottom layer a steel protective cover. In between is the fuel tank, battery, front and rear axles, fuse box and exhaust system. The four-cylinder engine has been "sliced" and flattened and lays with the gearbox at the entrance of the

sandwich, against the passenger cabin front wall. That leaves the nose free to contain the plastic bits-and-pieces, such as the washer bottle, and stronger impact absorbing beams. In a crash, the engine is pushed down and into the sandwich floor instead of into the passenger cabin. It is a brilliant yet simple solution that gives the new A-class the level of crash protection only found in big executive cars, according to Mercedes, which unveiled the car for the first time this week at the Geneva Motor Show. Even Rover's attempt to spoil the

launch by showing off concept ideas for a Mini for the next century did nothing to stymie the reception of the A-class. Rover's bug-eyed concept cars only confirmed that Mercedes is set on a path that no other carmaker in the world is yet ready to follow. Rover's designers came up with a similar solution to those at Mercedes, sticking a three-cylinder engine under the back seat but driving the rear wheels, unheard of among small cars these days. Geoff Upex, Rover's design and concepts director, says the rear wheel-drive idea was simply for "crash man-

agement and manoeuvrability". Having the engine in the front got in the way of stronger and more absorbent crash beams, which have to weave around the block and its attendant components, while the front wheels could not turn as fully, obstructed by the mountain of metal between them. With rear wheel-drive, the front wheels could have the concept Mini turning on a pound coin. Upex told me on Rover's Geneva stand that it was an elegant solution for a small car. "We are having to deal with crash regulations which were unimaginable in the days of Sir Alec. Having the engine up front just makes the job that much more difficult, but in the rear, it is out of the way and leaves the space clear for us to design the toughest structure."

So the new Mini for the year 2000 will be rear-engined, offering better-than-ever crash protection and cabin space. Er, not exactly, because Rover is locked into a deal to take conventional 1.4-litre engines from Chrysler, which will only fit under the bonnet. The Mini concepts were actually 18 months old and a long way from the final version due to be signed off by BMW, Rover's owner, later this year. Bernd Fischer, BMW's chairman and Issigonis's nephew, decided the Mini had to be recognisably a successor to the original: so, 40 years on, the Mini for the millennium will still be a front-engined, front-wheel-drive. Which leaves the technological field clear for Mercedes, unless Rover has some sparkling ideas none of us can yet imagine. However, to describe the A-class

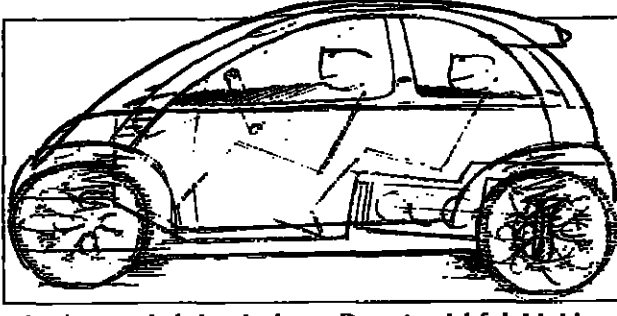
as a mini is slightly optimistic. It is short (just 3.57 metres compared to the Ford Ka's 3.63) but tall (more than 220mm higher than a Ka) and wide (88mm fatter than Ka). That height also helps make A-class safer because occupants sit about 20 centimetres higher than in a conventional hatchback; in a side-on collision, the impact should come below hip height and at the strongest part of the car in the door sills. For all its modern styling, the A-class seems a bulky car, the overall impression more of a squashed VW Golf in which you sit rather stiffly upright, like a schoolchild told to pay attention. There is lots of legroom though, oddly, headroom seems restricted in spite of the vehicle's height. And the engines are hardly mini-sized: 1.4 and 1.6-litre petrol engines and two 1.7-litre diesels, with a power range from 60 to 102 horsepower. So this Mini will be equally at home cruising as negotiating crowded city streets. The mix obviously appeals because Mercedes has already logged interest from 3,500 potential buyers in the UK. One chauffeur-hire company has ordered 25, which will be plush, luxurious, leather-trimmed and air-conditioned versions for use around London and the South East. Sales, which start next Spring, could be as high as 22,000 a year here, with customers ranging from young city singles to families who want to buy a safe second car. They will pay for the privilege of owning an A-class — between £13,000 and £15,000 — but they will also be buying the first generation of mini car to depart from engineering ideas laid down four decades ago. The age of Sir Alec might be ending, but the age of the Mercedes mini is dawning.

## ROVER'S GREAT IDEA - SHAME IT WON'T HAPPEN

WHEN Sir Alec Issigonis was given the go-ahead to build a revolutionary new Mini 40 years ago this week, legend has it he drew his first sketch on the back of a cigarette packet. Now the men charged with the job of designing a new Mini for 2000 seem hamstrung by Sir Alec's simple but brilliant idea: he decided to package a four-seater car into a box and bonnet just 10ft long. To do that though, he had to find somewhere to put the engine. So he turned it sideways and stuck it on top of a gearbox able to

transmit power to the front wheels. That left the cabin space untouched — an idea which spread to the extent that just about every type of small and medium-sized car on the market today uses a similar layout. This sketch, not seen before, of

the Mini concept cars at Geneva this week shows Rover's designers wanting to put the engine under the rear seats driving the rear wheels. The design is compact and clever, with the four-door version about the same length as an A-class but with the interior space of a BMW 7-series executive saloon. Pity, then, that Rover is forced to retain the original front-engine, front-wheel-drive layout, pioneered by Sir Alec, because the company has no engine short or angled enough to fit under the rear seats.



Newly revealed sketch shows Rover's wishful thinking

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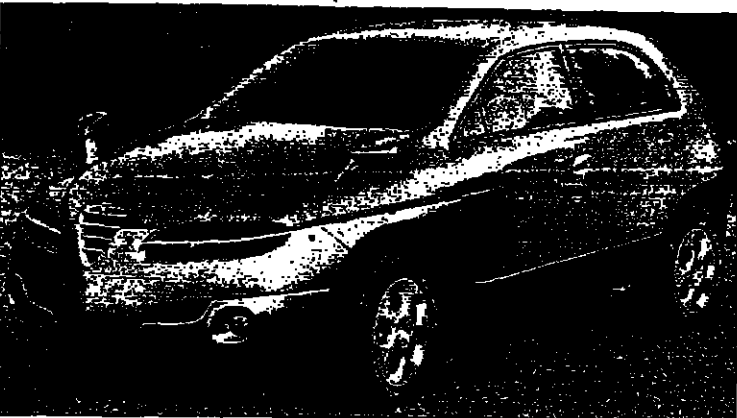
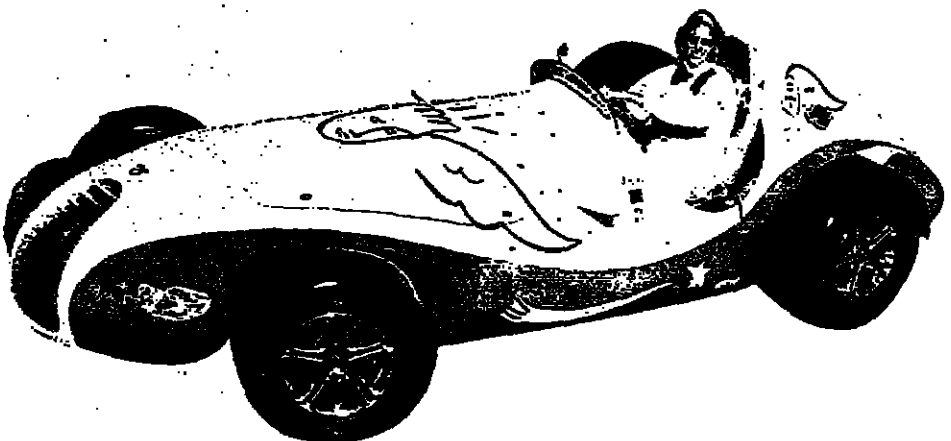
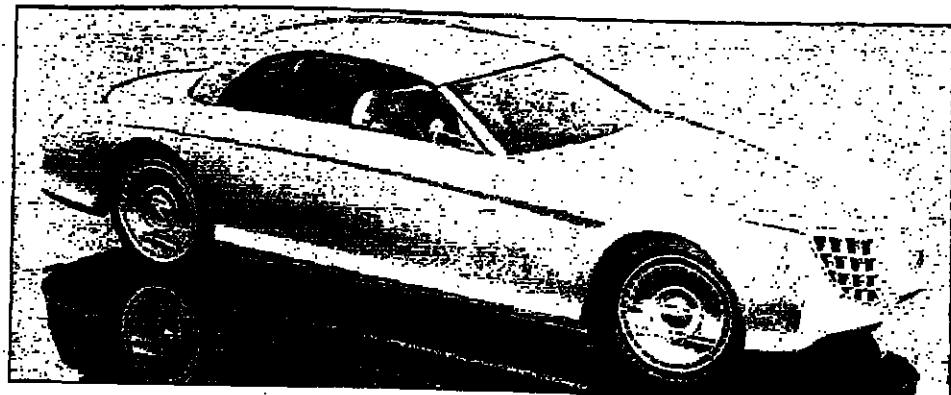
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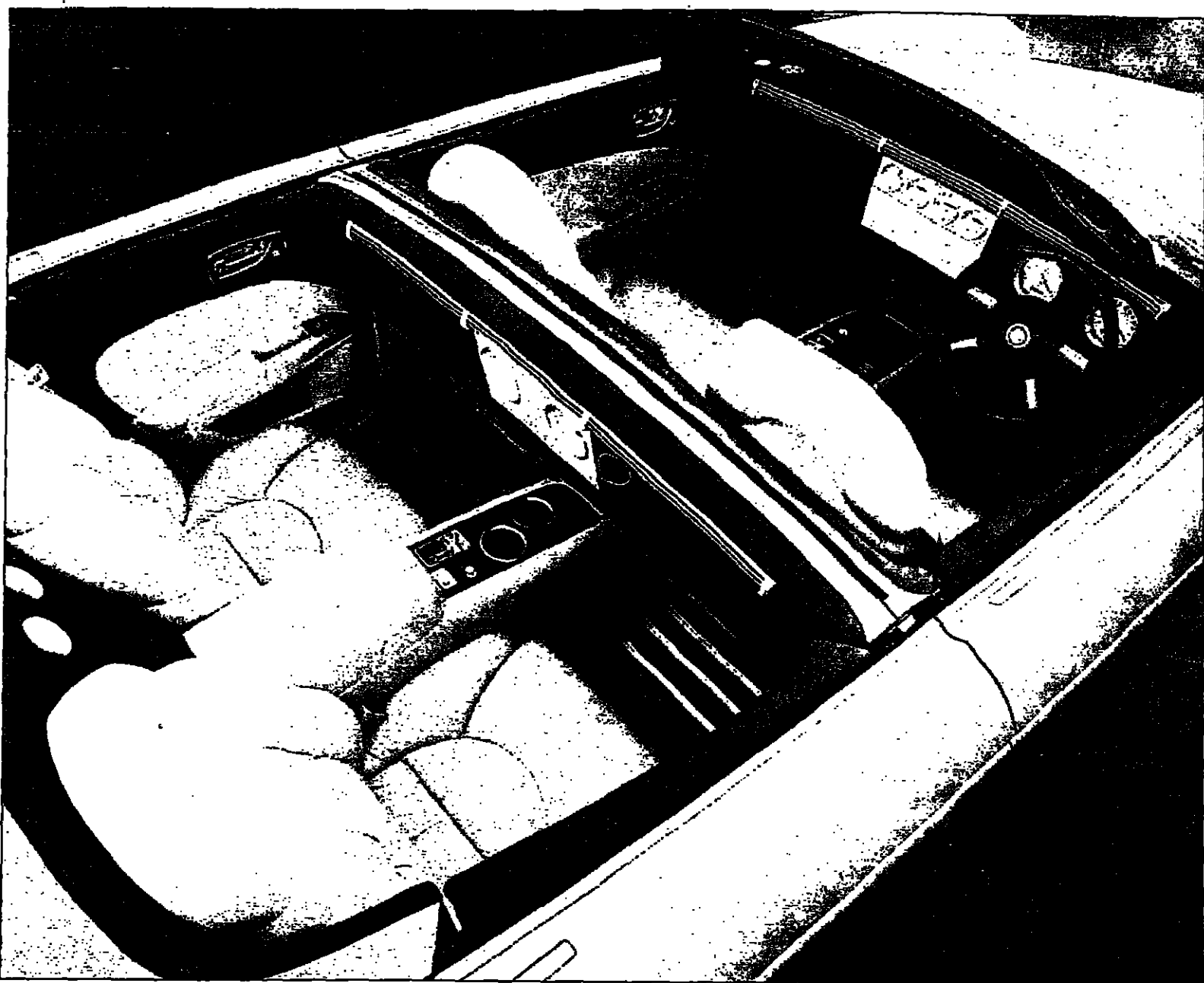
هكذا من الاصل



In our PC world, sybaritic outrageousness is only a 'concept'. But there was plenty at Geneva, says **Vaughan Freeman**



Chrysler's Phaeton, main picture and top, harks back to jazz-age self-indulgence. But Rinspeed's single-seat Mono Ego, above, takes the prize for exuberance. Bertone's 4x4 sports utility design for Alfa Romeo is both dramatic and practicable



## Chrysler's tempting Phaeton

**G**orgeous, gold, gigantic and glittering, Chrysler's way-over-the-top Phaeton is a car that F. Scott Fitzgerald's super-rich society adventurer Jay Gatsby would have felt perfectly at home in. It's the sort of car that Cary Grant might have been chauffeured in to pre-war Hollywood premieres.

Flying straight in the face of today's motoring wisdom that smaller is better, Chrysler has opted for the bigger, biggest, best approach with its outrageous and stunning Phaeton show car.

At this week's Geneva Motor Show, European manufacturers were vying with each other to cram as much passenger space and as many seats as possible into the shortest, smallest, narrowest cars, with Mercedes setting the pace with its new A-class.

Undaunted by tediously unglamorous, politically correct — if commercially and politically relevant — considerations, Chrysler has produced a concept car which throws all notions of producing an automo-

tive version of Dr Who's Tardis into the rubbish bin.

The Phaeton eschews recyclable plastics and ultra-lightweight and recycled materials. Instead, it is a gleaming 18ft of highly buffed chrome, mirror-like steel wheels and deeply plush leather. More than 6ft wide, the Phaeton makes no concessions to crowded roads, and it seats just four — though in club-class comfort, cosseted in white leather-shrouded seats as big as sofas. Instead of experimenting with battery power, fuel cells or minuscule petrol or diesel engines, the Phaeton follows the traditional Detroit Motor Town route and is powered by a vast petrol engine that would keep a small oil refinery in business non-stop. Under the bonnet is a 5.4-litre, V12 engine with a splendid 48 valves producing an enormous 425 brake horse power.

There are not one but two windcreens, one in the usual place at the front and another retractable

screen ahead of the rear-seat passengers, so that when the car's roof is stowed invisibly away, the people in the back can enjoy their open-top motoring without the inconvenience of the slipstream upsetting their carefully coiffed hair.

Chrysler is more than happy to admit that the inspiration for the Phaeton is drawn from half a century ago, from its 1940 Newport, a vehicle which was used during the wartime era for conveying the rich and famous in supreme comfort — and which strangely abandoned its stately image to be the pace car at the 1941 Indianapolis 500 race.

True, Chrysler, like other manufacturers, has also developed its concept mini cars to cash in on the trend towards ever more sophisticated yet smaller cars. Even so, with cars like the Dodge Viper and the Prowler, Chrysler has made a habit of showing off concept cars at motor shows, only to turn them into

road-going production vehicles within a matter of years. Could that mean the Phaeton will one day no longer be a dream car but a production reality?

**T**om Gale, Chrysler's product development executive vice president, believes that, just as car makers can exploit the development of niche markets in the small-car sectors, so there will always be a place for specialist big cars too.

Gale says: "I don't think that, in general terms, cars like the Phaeton will ever be built in large volumes. The Phaeton concept does suggest, though, that we like to look at styling icons, to produce vehicles that are larger than life. Concepts like the Phaeton enable us to elevate our thinking and our image."

The Phaeton itself is a very serious design statement as well as looking back to the past. It is a

matter of finding things that are significant and memorable, and which customers relate to. As for big cars themselves, I think there are times when it is worthwhile considering that, just because larger vehicles are not consistent with the direction that most modern vehicles in general are taking, that doesn't mean that there will never again be people able to afford something that is unique. People want things that are unique."

Gale says it is unlikely that the Phaeton would ever take to the road in its present shape without considerable changes. Even so, he adds, it is likely that many of the details in the car — such as the exquisite satin chrome used on the dashboard, the huge dials, a clock and a speedometer set into the back of the car's central divide so that the rear passengers know what is going on, even the car's badges — could well find themselves built into future Chryslers.

The Phaeton embodies an American motoring tradition and brings it to life once again, an era of huge cars, unfettered by the constraints of tiny garages in semi-detached homes, of cramped inner-city parking spaces, or the modern-day guilt that attaches to a car that is clearly expensive and expansive.

With its two-tone champagne-pearl colouring, huge grille, and 22-inch highly polished wheels, Phaeton is no such shrinking violet and recognisably harks back to the days when the wild, the beautiful and the rich not only had money to spend on cars, but did so — and then flaunted it.

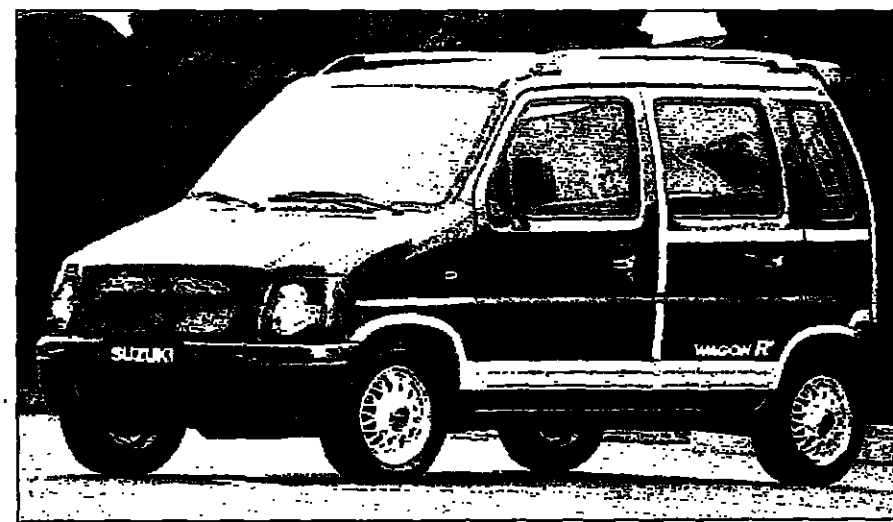
Given today's climate of automotive political correctness, isn't the Phaeton a little out of touch? Design director Neil Walling argues it is not: "With Phaeton we expanded the use of today's convertible by giving it four doors and two windshields. We took an elegant design that was originally

intended for the wealthy and we created a practical, contemporary convertible."

Still, designers are allowed to run riot occasionally — especially at a motor show, and at Geneva all the best were there — from Pininfarina, which styled Peugeot's glorious 406 coupé, to Bertone, which showed off a dramatic new 4x4, badged and graced as an Alfa Romeo. The wheelbase is mid-range so the Alfa-Bertone sports utility is not long though tall.

Will it go into production? Well, Alfa bosses were touting the idea that they would like to have distinct sports and leisure vehicle ranges, so Bertone's concept might have set the wheels turning.

But the award for most outrageous car went to Rinspeed with its evocation of classic single-seat race cars, the Mono Ego. As long as a Mercedes S-class and powered by a 32-valve, 4.6-litre V8, the Rinspeed will rocket to 62mph in 4.8 seconds and on to 160mph. Should be a bit of a struggle finding a place for the shopping though.



Buy a sensibly priced Berlingo, left, and the whole family's laughing. The wood-veneered Wagon R might leave everyone else in fits, however

## Invasion of the people-movers

Get an MPV. Get a lifestyle. Get the message?

**Vaughan Freeman and Kevin Eason see the future**

**Y**ou bought the surfboard and the mountain bike — but now you need the electric drill and a saw. Forget chrome and leather. Suzuki has opted for the MPV look by putting skirting boards on its bizarre new vehicle.

Just to underline the extremes of modern car design, the five-door Wagon R+ was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show apparently to appeal to that alien species who not only have time to drive but to windsurf, ski, bicycle — anything involving Lycra.

To describe Suzuki's choice of colour schemes for its new, little vehicle as... well, imaginative, would be understatement, but British eyes welled when the wraps came off the "wood" clad version. Memories of the old Morris 1000 Traveller leapt into some minds: hours of trying to get self-assembly wardrobes to stand up straight into others. Surely, only the hardiest sense of humour would allow a British driver to park the woody Wagon R+ in the drive.

Still, the wood finish was tasteful by comparison with

the all-white Sport version and the Cruiser, which included astonishingly white interiors. The 1-litre Wagon R+ — just 11ft long — is the small-scale end of a range of people-movers infesting Europe's showrooms. Everybody is making a multi-purpose, sit-where-you-like, put-anything-in-it vehicle — and if they aren't, they will.

According to carmakers the world over, owning a saloon or estate is not enough because you want to satisfy your lifestyle. And even if you don't have a family, you might want a versatile vehicle that has between one and seven seats and a big load-space, but which drives like a car, something off-roaders do not do.

Ten years ago, people carriers took just 10 per cent of sales, but that is forecast to double by 2005 as our lifestyles flourish, we don our wetsuits and ski jackets and head happily off into the sunset, our families chirruping contented-

ly in seats capable of being transformed into configurations from aircraft-style rows to four-place card tables.

Which is why Citroën is jumping into the market next spring with its oddly-named Berlingo Multispace.

Refreshingly — and unlike much of the competition though — it will be relatively cheap at less than £13,000. Citroën has decided that it will sell a basic, one-choice vehicle: just three metallic colours with co-ordinated interiors to pick from and one package of equipment. That policy of simplicity will allow Citroën to maintain bargain-basement prices at a time when a lot of people-carriers are demanding some executive car-style prices and should help make the Berlingo pretty popular throughout Europe.

Actually, the Multispace is a converted version of the "Van of the Year" Berlingo. You will not be surprised to discover that its humble origins as a

commercial vehicle are submerged in the sales blurb by a rusier picture of a "lifestyle vehicle that will appeal to the growing band of fun-seekers. Mountain bikes, scuba gear, surfboards and all manner of outdoor leisure equipment, together with five adults, can be accommodated." Yawn.

However, the Berlingo does offer the boot space of a Citroën XM in a small package, powered by 1.4-litre petrol or 1.9 diesel engines. With huge windows all round, it also features an electric sunroof that slides the whole length of the vehicle so that those in the back as well as the front can have their hair wind-tousled.

The five-door Multispace can seat five, along with 30kg of luggage, and, says Citroën, can trundle around town just as well as cruise on the motorways.

Berlingo owners might be passed on the motorway though by yet another new

vehicle from Mercedes-Benz. The Germans are getting ready to launch their "all-activity vehicle", the M-class, on to the market in the United States late this year and the UK in 1998.

M-class will also be a seven-seater but capable of going off-road too — more a Range Rover eater than a Berlingo beater — and will probably cost top Land Rover prices in Europe even though it is being made at a new plant in America. M-class will also have every latest gadget, from anti-lock brakes to anti-skid technology, plus a simple push-button low-ratio gearbox for driving off-road.

Power comes from Merc's new 3.2-litre V6, an engine which has two spark plugs per cylinder which, Mercedes engineers say, will mean lower exhaust emissions and better fuel economy, even though the vehicle is big and bulky.

Inevitably, the target audience for drivers of this vehicle will have one attribute sought by carmakers above all others — a lifestyle, you know those scuba-diving, biking, abseiling, sky-diving...

## Unclean fun with our prize mud-slinging pair

**Tony Dawe on our winners' weekend drive**

**M**olly and Alan Griffiths had a "wonderful time" up to their axles in mud last weekend: their prize for winning the Car 97 off-road competition.

"We completed 91.3 miles, a lot of them wading through water and charging up and down hills. It was nice to get somebody else's Land Rover dirty," Alan joked afterwards.

The couple were provided with a Land Rover Discovery by Marshalls of Peterborough as part of their prize entry to Midland Auto Trader four-wheel-drive day.

"The vehicle amazed us with what it could do. One minute we were going down into a gully with no apparent way out and then suddenly we were clear," Alan said.

The only thing which defeated us was the steepest hill-climb, which was like trying to get up the side of the canyon. It was well chewed up by the time we reached it. We got so far and had to give up, but those who did it were in very professional rally cars with heavy duty tyres and roll bars.

"We scored 317 points and since the winner only got 375

we think we did pretty well, especially as it was the first time we had entered a test like this."

Stephen Barrett and Christopher Gedney of Boston, Linx, took the first prize, with Julie Loades and Jacqueline McDonald of Peterborough claiming the Car 97 award.

Molly and Alan, of Harmer Hill, Shrewsbury, only entered our competition after being sent the details by their

son who is serving overseas in the Army. They have owned Land Rovers for the last 25 years but never entered them in rallies. Alan recently retired from the grain trade.

Last Saturday's event seemed designed to put only a little strain on the Griffiths' marriage; Alan was forced to drive one section blindfolded, guided only by instructions from his wife.

For another test, Alan had to drive into a box formed of traffic cones with a trailer hitched to the Land Rover, and then Janet was required to reverse out. "She did it without getting any penalty points," Alan said proudly.

**Before you spend £11,000 on a family car, spend a minute on the phone.**

**0800 184284.**



Alan and Molly Griffiths





Stuart Birch drives a rare Sheerline — Austin's regally cheap rationing-era bid for the luxury market

## Austin-tatious: austere Britain's bargain Bentley

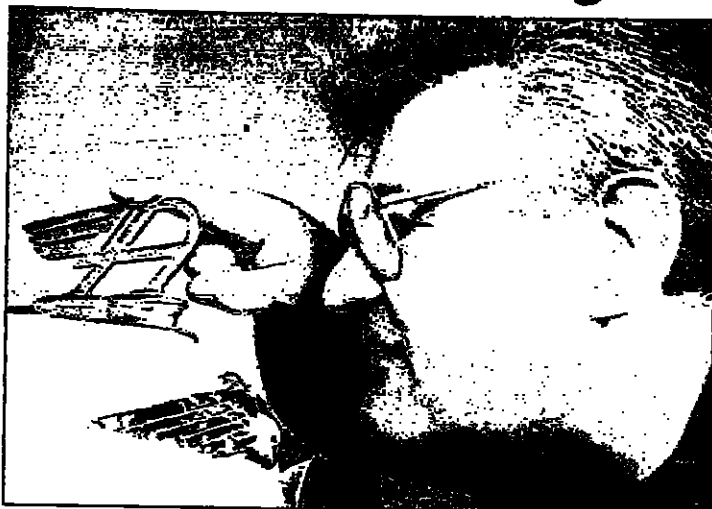
When is a Bentley not a Bentley? When it is an Austin Sheerline. From its massive Lucas P100 headlamps to its semi-rimmed boot, the Sheerline looks the part. And alphabetically it even beats the Bentley's flying-B radiator mascot — the Austin has a flying A.

Launched 50 years ago, the A125 Sheerline was Austin's cut-price answer to the regal set: Rolls-Royce, Bentley, and Daimler. It, too, pampered the privileged in a world of leather and walnut. It had wings that curled and flowed like Hawaiian breakers. It was big, it was handsome... but it was powered by a 4-litre engine and its chassis was said to be the equivalent of railway lines.

Few who bought such cars needed to know about that, though. The Sheerline looked the part and it was, in today's sales-speak, "aggressively priced". Originally the car had a basic price of £1,000. But later in 1947, double purchase tax was imposed on cars of that price and above. So Austin lopped a pound off it and thumbed its corporate nose at the Treasury.

The Sheerline looked totally British, although it was designed by Italian-born Dick Burd. "Really it was a crib of Bentley design," says Ian Coombes, secretary of the Austin Sheerline and Princess Club, whose 1948 model is possibly the world's oldest working example. "Leonard Lord, who was managing director of Austin in 1947, had used a Bentley during the Second World War. He wanted Austin to create something like it and they set to work. Soon after the war, he bought a new Bentley MKVI, took it to the factory, and told his people that was just what he had in mind, so they'd better make one that looked similar but at less than half the Bentley's price."

Lord eventually opted to create



Proud Duncan Greig with his restored white, 1951 Sheerline

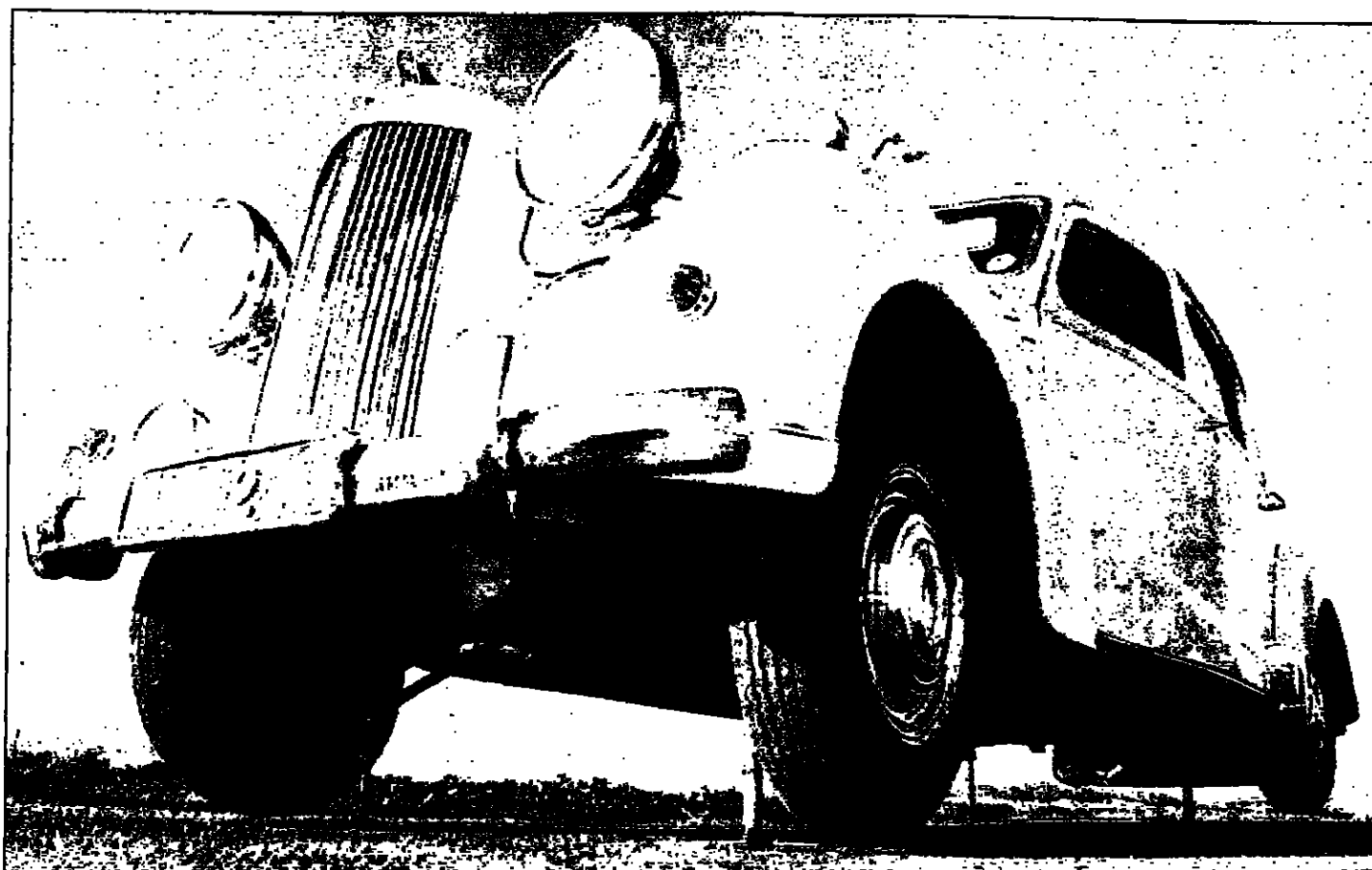
not one but two prestige cars on the same chassis. They were mechanically similar and apparent rivals. But while the Sheerline had a prewar look, the Austin A125 Princess, with body by Vandien Plas, had more modern styling with headlamps faired into the wings. The saloon Princess was not particularly successful, although the limousine version remained in production for more than 20 years.

The Sheerline, with its heavy headlamps gravitas, proved a splendid carriage for British ambassadors. As a Rolls-Royce and Bentley price-beater, it was just what the austerity-stricken Foreign Office needed. Its chrome sparkled magnificently beneath the setting sun of Empire, and, provided onlookers didn't happen to have a copy of the 1947 *Guide to Posh Cars* in their pockets, the big Austin could pass itself off as thoroughly grand.

About 8,000 Sheerlines were built between 1947 and 1954. In November, 1947, it acquired Royal



Status when the Queen and Prince Philip were given one by Austin as a wedding present. Around Britain, the Sheerline found favour as a mayoral carriage. It was also built as a hearse, an ambulance, a long-wheelbase limousine, a timbered estate car called the Wentworth, and even a van — the Belfast *Telegraph* had four. The weirdest



We have lift-off: The Sheerline's luxury specifications featured a hydraulic self-jacking system

1953, Queen Juliana of The Netherlands had a convertible built on a Sheerline chassis. It was last heard of in the USA — that's the one we really want to find."

Rather nearer home is a Sheerline which the club knows all about, which is owned by Duncan Greig. When he was 16, Duncan, now 43, fell in love with a Sheerline. He bought it for £65 even though he was too young to drive. "I just had to have it," he says. "I needed restoring and I started the work, but it was too much for me then. Sadly, it went to a breaker. But I never forgot that car. My ambition was to buy another but it took me nearly 20 years."

Today, Duncan's white, 1951 Sheerline is almost fully restored and looks magnificent. "I don't know how many hours I have spent working on the car but it's a lot. I just learnt how to do it as I went along," he adds. "I do all the work on the Sheerline myself, except for the upholstery and wood trim — I'm about to spend £450 on that."

Everything works perfectly, even the built-in hydraulic self-jacking system. The commanding driving position sits behind a vast steering wheel and, of course, the seats are leather, the dashboard is walnut veneer and even the ashtray covers are veneered.

The Sheerline has a four-speed gearbox with steering-column gearchange, with first and second furthest from the driver, which feels unnatural but works well enough. I pressed the starter button of this near two-ton leviathan, released the umbrella-style handbrake and we moved off, first gear whining, the exhaust sighing. Back in the 1950s, all BBC sound effects of cars driving away were just like this.

"He'll start away in top gear if you ask him to," says Duncan. The vague, low-gear steering was not as heavy as I had feared, but any aircraft-carrier captain would feel an affinity with the turning circle and the bonnet that stretches ahead like a flight deck.

In fact, considering its size, weight and age, the Sheerline is

reasonably agile except when turning at low speed. The ride was good (this was the first Austin to have independent front suspension) and, surprisingly, the road-holding inspired confidence, although everything is done relatively sedately. As speed reached 60mph, the wind started to roar; it is said that turning the giant headlamps around adds 4mph to the Sheerline's top speed.

"On a run, he'll do 16 to 17 miles to the gallon, around town, about 10 to 12 mpg on leaded," reassures Duncan.

I started to enjoy this big, stately car, sweeping along narrow lanes, oncoming traffic slowing and shuffling towards the side of the road, drivers and passengers staring uncomprehendingly and mouth- ing, "What's that?"

My wave of thanks may have looked just a shade imperious, but what the hell — it's that sort of car, and they don't know there's a truck engine beneath that mighty bonnet, and a pair of railway lines holding it all together.

## The drive they'll use to win

Alan Copps checks out the latest Nissan Primera, our Times/Lease Plan company drivers' competition car

One of the advantages of entering our quest to find Britain's best company car driver is the opportunity to try out, albeit briefly, the latest Nissan Primera SRI, a model aimed specifically at the working motorist who drives a high number of miles every year.

The Primera is one of those cars that is always with us: Nissan has refined and updated the model over the years and now offers a wide range, from the basic 1.6-litre to the newly introduced sporty GT version. But the SRI is likely to be the favourite of the long-distance "user chooser" category into which most of our Times/Lease Plan competitors fall.

In five-door hatchback or four-door saloon style it offers a high, but thoroughly practical, specification and its chassis was completely revised when the model was revamped last year.

The most immediately noticeable result is much greater interior space, which gives the driver a real feeling of getting "a lot of car for your money", even before the engine is fired up. The sports seats give support in all the right places and offer lumbar adjustment, an essential for the high-mileage motorist.

The leather steering wheel, prominent rev-counter dial and controls that come readily to hand in the wrap-around cockpit all combine to suggest that it might live up to that "driver's car" image with which it was launched.

External body styling is more aerodynamic than the previous model, and the most obvious signs of the SRI's performance are a large body-

coloured spoiler and alloy wheels.

But these are only skin-deep signs. It is the chassis revisions which do most to justify the label. The SRI has sports-tuned suspension for extra grip in all conditions and precise handling. This provides a significant advantage at any time, but it is especially valuable in the kind of manoeuvring test which forms part of our competition.

That test is far from a party piece to enable our contestants to show off. It is based on the kind of everyday parking and turning situations that any driver might encounter, the only addition being that of a ball and saucer on the bonnet to monitor how smoothly these movements can be performed.

On the road, the suspension and handling of the car provide the driver with the right combination of "road feel" and comfort to exploit its performance in any conditions.

During its development, the car was subjected to thousands of miles of testing on roads throughout Belgium and France, many specifically chosen for their rough surfaces. After that sort of test, says Nissan, it should be able to put up with anything to be found in Britain.

The engine that provides all the performance is a typically quiet Nissan powerplant, a 16-valve, 2-litre fuel-injected unit which produces 128 brake horsepower. The power comes in a smooth curve and is easily

handled by the five-speed manual gearbox.

Drive hard, and the car responds in an impressively sporty manner, but if you're on the motorway it will cruise in relaxed style, giving the feel that it would run happily all day, the sort of thing the company car driver seeks.

Given Nissan's reputation for build quality and reliability, the Primera SRI is likely to find plenty of support among

those 30 to 40-year-old "user choosers" who are expected to be its main buyers. Nissan estimates that more than 80 per cent of all new Primers will be bought with cash from company coffers.

There couldn't be a better opportunity to try the car than to enter *The Times/Lease Plan Company Car Driver* of the Year competition. The Primera SRI will be used for all the road driving and for the

manoeuvring tests in each heat. All you need to enter is to raise a team of three from your company and get the endorsement of your fleet manager. Then fill in the form.

The first prize is an expenses-paid trip to the Portuguese Grand Prix at Estoril on October 26, the culmination of the 1997 season. The team prize — driver training for 12 people from the winning fleet — is provided by Drive Tech, one of Britain's leading driving specialists, which organises the tests at each heat. The finals are at the Silverstone Driving Centre.



Most obvious signs of the SRI's performance are a large spoiler and alloy wheels

**THE TIMES**  
**Lease Plan**  
**Company**  
**Car Driver**  
**1997**

## Entry Form

**THE TIMES**  
**Lease Plan**  
**Company**  
**Car Driver**  
**1997**

### • About your company

Name of entrant: ..... Position: ..... Signature: .....  
NB: Entrant should be director/senior manager responsible for the company's car fleet

Company name: .....

Address: ..... Tel number: ..... Fax number: .....

Post code: ..... Number of employees: ..... Number of company cars: .....

### • Nominated drivers

	Surname	Forename	Job title	Age	Points on licence (max 3)
1					
2					
3					
4					

### • Competition rules

The closing date for entries is March 28 1997. Drivers must be 24 years of age or over to enter. Only corporate entries will be accepted. Drivers must be nominated by the director or senior manager responsible for the company car fleet. Drivers must be nominated in teams of three. The entrant may also nominate himself/herself as part of the team. Companies can only enter one team. Competitors must drive a company car or vehicle as part of their remuneration package. Qualification for the team/company award will be dependent upon a written test to be completed by the entrant at that team's regional heat. Employees of Lease Plan, DriveTech, Nissan, News International and the Birkdale Group are not permitted to enter. In the spirit of the competition, competitors who reached the final in two previous consecutive years, specialist organisations such as driver training companies, police, the armed forces and the like are not permitted to enter. A place in the regional heats will be confirmed in writing at least ten days prior to the heat. In the event of over-subscription, qualification to the regional heats will be judged through a random other telephone questionnaire. If the team does not qualify the entrant will be informed in writing prior to the heat. Feedback on each driver's performance will be available after the competition. The reserve driver will be called upon at the regional heat should one of the first three drivers be unable to compete. In the event of a finalist not being able to compete in the final, the next highest scoring driver from the regional heats will be invited to compete in their place. The prize for the winner will be a special trip for two to the Portuguese Grand Prix. The team/company prize will be a driver training programme for 12 employees and the use of a Nissan vehicle for three months. Cash alternatives are not available. The judge's decision is final.

### • Which venue?

Please select your 1st and 2nd choice location/date of regional heat (indicate 1 or 2 in box):

Elstree, Herts	Friday, 25 April	<input type="checkbox"/>
Macclesfield, Cheshire	Friday, 9 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bracknell, Berks	Friday, 16 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham	Friday, 30 May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gatwick, Surrey	Friday, 6 June	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coventry	Friday, 13 June	<input type="checkbox"/>

You must ensure that entrant and nominated drivers are able for both first and second choice dates and for the final at Silverstone on Friday, 4 July 1997. Initial qualification may be by telephone questionnaire. Entrants and drivers will be contacted on an individual basis.

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Transmission: five-speed manual.

Acceleration: 0-62mph in 9.6 seconds.

Maximum speed: 127mph.

Economy: Urban 26.4mpg; extra-urban 44.8mpg; combined 35.8mpg.

Equipment: Anti-lock brakes, power-steering, driver's airbag, seat-belt pre-tensioners, manual sunroof, electric front windows, height-adjustable sports seats and tilt-adjustable steering column, remote central locking with alarm and immobiliser. Four-speaker, RDS radio/cassette. Alloy wheels and body-coloured spoiler.

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## Linda Galloway follows the sun by BMW



Despite its awesomely sized fuel tank, the BMW R850 proved a perfect mount for seeing Cape Town's many beauty spots and coping with its chaotic traffic conditions

I felt like the night before Christmas. If I went to bed early, tomorrow would come quicker, and then I would get to spend ten days touring superb scenery on a flash new motorcycle.

What made it even better was the fact that I was to collect the silver R850R at the BMW Pavilion on South Africa's Cape Town waterfront — in February nobody really wants to be riding motorbikes on England's icy roads. In Cape Town it was a glorious 28C.

While the bike was intimidating to look at — the enormous angular petrol tank gives the impression of awesome size — it was an almost perfect fit, and the gentle sound of the boxer engine gave no hint of the power at my disposal. My only gripe was that my fingers had trouble reaching the indicator switches, leading to a few startled lurches as I involuntarily opened the throttle or shut it down while trying to indicate.

I put it down to teething trouble, and headed for Cape Point, 30 miles away, where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet in a line of spume that stretches towards the horizon.

My plan was to make a round trip to see as much of Cape Town and its environs as possible. I had made the journey before, but never with the advantages of two wheels. So, with the imposing front face of Table Mountain to my right, I headed east towards False Bay and straight into a traffic jam. It was the J&B Met, the year's biggest horseracing event, and the world wanted to be there. But the BMW and I sped through it and 30 minutes later I was at what felt like the edge of the continent (it's not: the southernmost tip of Africa is 180 miles away, at Cape Agulhas).

The Boxer was a gentleman, most forgiving of its novice rider. It took a while to get used to handling the machine, mainly because I felt like a fly on a rhinoceros. The machine is, in fact, quite streamlined in design: a combination of Nineties chic and retro styling with raised handlebars, chrome headlight and a user-friendly instrument panel which includes a handy

## BMW R850R

Engine: 848cc horizontally opposed twin producing 70bhp at 7,000rpm  
Transmission: five-speed gearbox  
Performance: 0-62mph, 5 secs. Max speed, 110mph  
Weight: 235kg unladen  
Seat height: 76-80cm adjustable  
Price: £7,995 plus £450 delivery charges.

petrol indicator light. The weight distribution and the cutaway seat gave me confidence.

The biggest test came when I was blasted by an unfriendly southeasterly wind at 25mph, with gusts of up to 50. Locals call it the Cape Doctor, as they say that it blows pollution and other ills out to sea, but not it is not so kindly looked upon by bikers. It tunnels through

the gaps in the mountains around Cape Town, slamming into unsuspecting riders as they round corners on the contour-hugging roads that circle the peninsula. You never know which direction it's going to come from, and a sudden gust can have you heading for the pavement and an unplanned airborne journey 150 metres downwards.

The BMW's perspex visor, reminiscent of a police riot-shield, deflects the head-on wind effectively, but only the solid weight and roadholding of the bike keeps you upright and heading in the right direction when taken by surprise from the side.

Cape Town is a splendid place, jam-packed with breathtaking scenery, but it's wise to keep your eyes not only on the winding roads but also on other road users. South African drivers are notoriously cavalier, and what with the virtual collapse of traffic control in Cape Town, and cows grazing on the verges of dual-carriageway nat-

ional roads, anything can happen. The Boxer is great for accelerating out of potential trouble: even in fifth gear the response is instant when you nudge the throttle, and the standard ABS braking system proved itself.

Overtaking a BMW 7-series saloon on the coast-hugging road that runs downhill from Llandudno to Camps Bay, I decided that the Boxer, sitting in the middle of BMW's fleet, was a thirty-something status symbol — not the rearward 650 road model or trail bike, nor the sedate 1100R tourer, but the equivalent of a sporty 3-series car with the head-turning panache of just two wheels.

Safe and easy to ride, I never got within a whisper of the upper rev register, although I would have liked to have tried.

You can hire a BMW F650 motorcycle from the BMW Pavilion in Cape Town (021 21 419 7362) for £450 per day (£58) with unlimited mileage, or for three to five days from £350 a day (£45), which includes 125 miles (200km) a day free mileage, excluding insurance.

## Boxer fits the Cape

## Tuned up for the long and winding road

Beth Rissen  
meets songstress  
Judie Tzuke

Singer-songwriter Judie Tzuke is driving around Britain on a 22-date tour, her first for 11 years. Best known for her classic hit *Stay with me till dawn*, Judie completed her new album, *Under the Angels*, at the same time as bringing up her two-year-old daughter, Talula. She also markets her own mail-order record label, Big Moon.

What was your first car?

A Mini Clubman Estate. It had wooden panelled doors and I loved it.

What car do you drive now?

A BMW, but at the moment I am driving the Vauxhall Vectra loaned by BSM for the tour.

What is your dream car?

It would have to be a BMW 528i. It is a really beautiful car — but I don't think I could ever afford it.

What was your most hated car?

I believe it was an Austin 1100, but I'm not entirely sure. It was a big square ugly thing. I didn't have it long because it blew up.

What is your worst habit in a car?



With a Vectra from tour sponsors BSM, Judie is ready to roll

I have been told by my other half, Paul, that it is talking.

What infuriates you the most about other drivers?

Everything.

What is the most unusual car you have ever owned or driven?

It would have to be my army-green plastic Citroën Maserati. It was like driving a tent, the roof was buttoned down, but it was ideal when the weather was nice.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Increase the speed limit on the motorway; there must be a better way to judge it to fit the weather and traffic conditions.

If you could change anything about road transport, what would it be and why?

I might look at pedestrianising more of inner London because the traffic there is just terrible.

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**2**  
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Tuesday  
Wednesday  
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Friday

## WORKING WEEK

Course director who makes Cheltenham jump next week  
**PAGE 27**

## BUSINESS

Graham Searjeant examines the soufflé syndrome  
**PAGE 29**

## SPORT

The goals keeping Juninho at home in Middlesbrough  
**PAGES 42-48**

**THE HIDDEN ASSETS AT BROCKET HALL**  
**PAGE 27**

SATURDAY MARCH 8 1997



Right tasty: Mike Darrington, managing director of Greggs, centre, Malcolm Simpson, financial director, right, and David Parker, retail operations director, reported a 20 per cent increase in pre-tax profits for 1996 to £15.7 million. Earnings per share were 95.8p (79p) and the total dividend is 32p (26p)

## Littlewoods ends talks to buy Freemans from Sears

By JON ASHWORTH

LITTLEWOODS, the pool-to-retailing group, has broken off negotiations to buy the £395 million Freemans mail order business from Sears, leaving its expansion plans in disarray.

The move could spark a bidding scramble for Freemans, and is a blow to James Ross, chairman of Littlewoods, who is struggling to refocus the group after years of upheaval. Only three days ago, Littlewoods put its 135 high street shops up for sale — part of a drive to concentrate on home shopping. Part of the anticipated proceeds of £500 million or more would have financed the Freemans acquisition. The

deal, announced in January, received an early setback when it was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC). Littlewoods hoped to secure an exclusive deal with Sears, but was informed on Wednesday that it had received "approaches from a number of parties". They are thought to include N Brown, the Manchester mail order company.

Littlewoods conceded yesterday the timing was "unfortunate", but did its best to put a positive gloss on events. The Freemans acquisition would have boosted its presence in the agency market, where Littlewoods is second to Great

Universal Stores. A company spokesman said the sale of Littlewoods stores would proceed as planned. "It's all systems go. This will have no impact on the stores sale."

The development is a high-risk move by Liam Strong, the embattled Sears chief executive, who hopes to distribute the Freemans sale proceeds to shareholders through a share buyback or special dividend. Sears said it was reviewing the new approaches, and hoped to conclude negotiations "in weeks rather than months".

Mr Strong said: "Consolidation in the mail order market will result in benefits for Freemans, its customers, and

Sears shareholders. It remains the board's intention to achieve the price expected for Freemans, and to return the cash proceeds to ordinary shareholders. We are committed to achieving this in the shortest possible time frame."

Littlewoods said it remained keen to talk to Sears about an exclusive deal, but conceded privately that prospects were bleak. It insisted that its presence in home shopping remains strong. Its direct business, Index Extra, generated £160 million in sales last year — making it number three in the sector — and the company has ventured into the niche market with the purchase of a

stake in Jacques Vert. Further deals are expected.

For Mr Ross, the former chief executive of Cable and Wireless, the week's events are an embarrassment. He has been working on a strategic review with Bain & Company, the management consultant, and has enjoyed a spell of relative boardroom calm. Feuding among descendants of Sir John Moores, Littlewoods founder, and his brother, Cecil, had threatened to overwhelm the group. He said: "Our intention to be a world-class home-shopping business remains unchanged."

Tempus, page 28

## Former NatWest trader resigns new job

By ROBERT MILLER  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

KYRIACOS PAPOULIS, the former NatWest derivatives trader at the centre of an investigation into a £50 million "black hole", has resigned from his job with a US broker.

Bear Stearns, a US securities house, yesterday confirmed his departure. A spokeswoman said: "We have accepted the resignation of Kyriacos Papoulis, an interest rate options dealer in our derivatives department. We have conducted a thorough review of his open trading positions and are satisfied that they were all booked and valued properly. We have notified the Securities and Futures Authority (the UK watchdog for brokers and futures dealers) of his resignation."

Mr Papoulis, who left NatWest Markets in December, has retained Stephen Pollard, a partner in Kingsley Napley, the City law firm. Mr Pollard represented Nick Leeson, the rogue trader whose dealings on the Far East money markets caused the £830 million collapse of Barings two years ago.

NatWest is expected to conclude its internal investigation into the £50 million "black hole" some time next week. The bank's investigators are looking at how the losses, incurred on the interest rate options market, could have gone undetected for so long.

Neil Dodgson, Mr Papoulis's immediate supervisor, has been suspended "for failing to supervise, pending the conclusion of an internal inquiry". Interest rate options are instruments used to limit or cap potential loss-making positions in the event of volatile movements in world interest rates.

## WEEKEND MONEY



**31**  
Anne Ashworth on testing times for the City watchdog

**29**  
Handy hints for last-minute PEP buyers



## BUILDING SOCIETIES



**30**  
Equal shares in the great Northern Rock payout

## INVESTMENT 2

**34**  
Be in the picture for an extra return



## PENSIONS



**36**  
The Government's new pension proposals explained

## BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100	4420.3	(+21.0)
Yield	3.83%	
FTSE All share	2153.44	(+18.19)
Windex	18198.74	(+157.41)
New York	7003.19	(+58.49)*
Dow Jones	608.85	(+3.29)*
S&P Composite	107.82	(+0.27)
Federal Funds	5.75%	(0.00%)
Long Bond	6.89%	(0.00%)
3-month Interbank	6.75%	(0.00%)
Libor long 6m	11.11%	(11.11%)
New York	1.9025*	(1.6150)
London	1.8047	(1.6121)
Dal	2.7253	(2.7704)
FF	2.9260	(2.9491)
SF	2.3829	(2.4002)
Yen	195.58	(198.00)
£ Index	98.1	(98.4)
\$55/\$		
\$55/\$		
London	1.7150*	(1.7185)
DM	5.7940*	(5.7875)
FF	1.4840*	(1.4820)
SF	121.50*	(121.15)
£ Index	104.3	(104.2)
Tokyo close Yen	121.15	
Brand 15-day (May)	\$19.75	(\$19.25)
London close	\$349.45	(\$352.25)
* denotes midday trading price		

London	1.7150*	(1.7185)
DM	5.7940*	(5.7875)
FF	1.4840*	(1.4820)
SF	121.50*	(121.15)
£ Index	104.3	(104.2)
Tokyo close Yen	121.15	

Brand 15-day (May) \$19.75 (\$19.25)

London close \$349.45 (\$352.25)

\* denotes midday trading price

## Litigation

GKN, the engineering group, will be embroiled in US litigation for at least another 18 months. **Page 26**

## A City goal for Birmingham

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BIRMINGHAM CITY may be languishing close to the bottom of football's first division, but the club scored a goal in the City when its shares raced to a 16 per cent premium on the first day of dealings on the stock market.

The shares, which now trade on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM), rose 8p to 58p, valuing the company at £29 million. The flotation raised £7.5 million to invest in the club.

Karren Brady, who becomes the youngest female chief executive of a quoted company, saw the value of her 750,000 share options increase to £435,000. Trevor Francis, the manager, is believed to have purchased 40,000 shares, while Steve Bruce, the team captain, took

a stake of 50,000 shares. Birmingham's arrival on the AIM lifted the total money raised on the smaller companies' market beyond £1 billion yesterday.

About 250 companies are quoted on the market with a total capitalisation of more than £6 billion.

Birmingham said that the issue was substantially oversubscribed. There were 7,000 individual applications, of which 1,900 were from season-ticket holders.

Birmingham City is at present five places off the bottom of the table after a disastrous run of form that has seen them lose seven of their last eight games and could face a tough battle to avoid relegation at the end of the season.

## Lilley phone poll on pension plan

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

PETER LILLEY, the Social Security Secretary, personally canvassed the UK's biggest life companies for their responses to the proposed privatisation of pensions.

On the day the proposals were published, he and a number of his officials phoned the major players in the industry to gauge their reaction.

Until then, his plans for reform of the state pension had been kept under wraps for fear of the political damage that could have been done had incomplete information leaked out. So secret were the proposals that the insurance industry was taken by surprise by the announcement.

Mr Lilley's first opportunity to gather responses from insurers was on Wednesday.

Among those contacted by

Mr Lilley were Richard Branson, head of the Virgin empire and founder of Virgin Direct, which sells pensions by phone; Sir Peter Davis, chief executive of Prudential Corporation, the biggest name in UK life and pensions; and David Prosser, chief executive of Legal & General.

Tony Wood, marketing manager of Virgin Direct, said: "Richard's reaction is that this is a good step, but it is a long time overdue. We remain concerned that the traditional pension companies are being given a massive golden goose, and we question whether the industry in its present form really deserves, and is equipped to handle, such a large responsibility."

Anne Ashworth, page 31

## Subbuteo loses home fixture

By ADAM JONES

SUBBUTEO, the table-top football game invented in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, in 1947, is no longer to be made in Britain.

The decision of Hasbro, the US toy group, to shift production of several games to Ireland and Spain, will cause 250 redundancies. The company is closing two Waddington Games factories, in Castle Gate, near Leeds, and Paddock Wood, Kent.

Hasbro bought the games division of Waddington, a listed printing and packaging company, for £50 million in 1994. Waddington devised the Cluedo game and made Monopoly, an "Ameri-

can invention, under licence in the UK. It bought the rights to Subbuteo after England's World Cup triumph in 1966.

Between then, the last two Waddington factories produced Subbuteo and Monopoly pieces, craft toys and three-dimensional jigsaws for Hasbro.

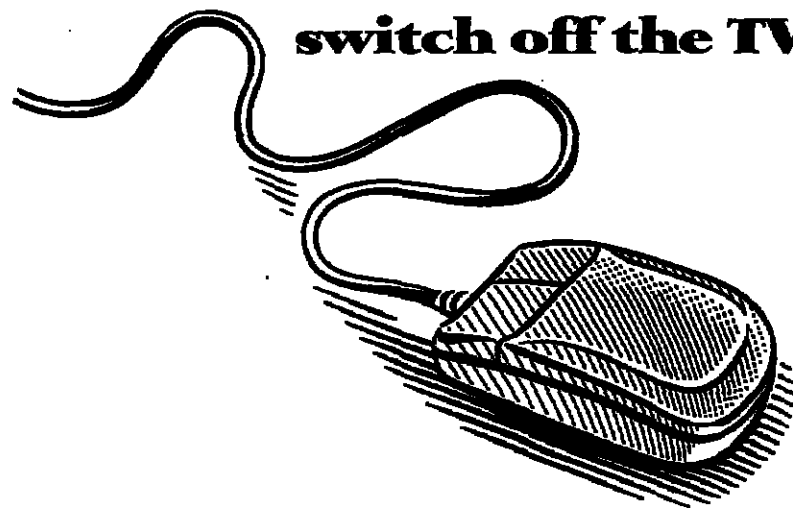
The company said the UK factories are outdated and have continued to be less efficient than purpose-built Hasbro plants overseas, where spare capacity exists. The Castle Gate factory, which employs 200, was designed as a First World War munitions building. Bryr Ellis, managing director of Hasbro JK, said the "difficult

but necessary decision has nothing to do with the cost or quality of British labour". He said: "The children's entertainment market is extremely competitive."

The closures will happen on June 7. The mouldings processes will be transferred to its big Irish factory in Waterford with other operations diverted to Valencia in Spain.

Ian McCartney, Labour's Chief Employment Spokesman, said: "Yet again a major company is exporting jobs to other European countries which operate a minimum wage and the social charter."

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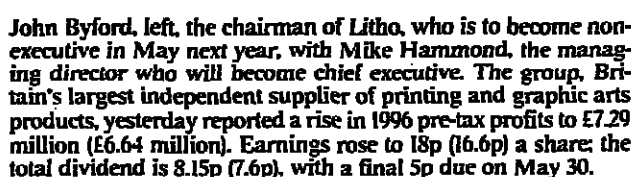
77 65

**BY OLIVER AUGUST**

**Argent**, the property investment and development group, has sold two distribution units, in Didcot and Bicester, to British Telecom Pension Scheme for £38 million, reflecting a net yield of 7.3 per cent. The shares were unchanged at 471p.

GKN declared a £270 million provision resulting from the case, only hours after announcing its full-year results on Thursday. The group earned record pre-tax profits

Andy Chambers, industry analyst at SocGen, said: "The share price has been absolutely trashed by various press comments in recent weeks, indicating that they could have up to \$800 million of liability. The market was over-discounting the worst-case scenario. We now have a clear figure of the provision and likely cash outflow from the litigation and we can ascertain what the real impact on earnings is likely to be."



**BY ROBERT MILLER**

The SFA said that after Mr Porter was questioned by SFA inspectors about his trading on the two client accounts he "devised a letter from a client purporting to thank the firm for its active management of the accounts".

ITT, the hotels group that is fighting a \$6.5 billion bid from Hilton Hotels, has sold its half share in Madison Square Garden, the New York arena, for \$650 million. The purchaser is Cablevision Systems, which owns the other half of the arena. The deal includes the New York Knicks basketball team and the Rangers hockey team as well as the MSG cable-TV network. ITT said it represented an 81 per cent gain on the \$360 million it paid for the stake two years ago.

**WT FOODS**, the specialist foods manufacturer, is raising £7.85 million through a share placing and open offer to fund the acquisition of Chadha International, an importer and distributor of Chinese and other oriental foods, for £6.7 million. WT also announced the sale of Red Rose Velvets, a cotton velvet manufacturer, to the vendors of Chadha for £600,000. New WT shares are being offered at 30p. Existing shares were unchanged at 33p yesterday.

WHITBREAD has agreed the conditional sale of its Keg restaurant business to Raleigh Corporation of Canada for £23 million. Keg operates 63 managed and 18 franchised restaurants in Canada and the Pacific North West. David Thomas, Whitbread chief executive designate, said Keg was non-core. "Now is a good time for us to sell the business as it is producing sales growth and trading more profitably," he said. Whitbread will continue to concentrate on Europe.

SHARES in Hawtin, the manufacturer and distributor, dropped 10 to 40p after the group said that it was likely to report a loss from its American distribution business in the first half of the year because of the costs of replacing its distribution agreement for Barclay Leisure products in the U.S. The company said that during the time taken to establish a new distributor in America there had been a loss of sales that had not yet been made up.

COMPASS, the contract catering group, is to take a 20 per cent stake in Selecta, a food vending machine company. Selecta, part of Valora, the Swiss group, will soon be floated on the Swiss stock exchange. Compass's investment, which is unlikely to exceed £50 million when the flotation price is set, is to be funded by cash and equity. It forms part of a co-operation agreement which will see Compass buying all the food for Selecta's European vending and food service.

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia S ...	2.14	1.86
Austria Sch ...	23.37	18.87
Belgium Fr ...	55.77	55.77
Canada Cdn ...	2.60	2.10
Cyprus Cyp ...	0.854	0.799
Denmark Kr ...	11.10	10.28
France F ...	9.80	9.80
France Fr ...	9.69	9.69
Germany Dm ...	2.81	2.70
Greece Dr ...	45.1	42.5
India Rupee ...	12.10	12.10
Ireland ...	1.20	1.00
Ireland Pt ...	1.09	1.01
Israel Shk ...	5.71	5.06
Japan Yen ...	2851	2851
Japan Yen ...	209.0	183.0
Malta ...	0.059	0.804
Netherlands Gld ...	3.251	3.021
Netherlands ...	2.22	2.22
Norway Kr ...	1.70	10.90
Portugal Esc ...	287.0	268.50
S Africa Rnd ...	7.76	6.96
Switzerland ...	24.50	24.50
Sweden Kr ...	12.95	12.15
Switzerland Fr ...	2.61	2.53
Turkey Lira ...	20.00	19.70
USA ...	1.708	1.708

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**By JON ASHWORTH**

Sir Johnn. 56, succeeds Sir John Leahy, who is to step down at the annual meeting on March 20. He remains a non-executive director. The move completes a boardroom reshuffle that sees Dieter Bock, the German property entrepreneur, depart to pursue new interests. Mr Bock sold his 18.6 per cent of Lonrho

Sir John Craven rescued Morgan Grenfell after Guinness — the bank advised on the Distillers bid — and negotiated its sale to Deutsche Bank.

**BY ALASDAIR MURRAY**

A provisional agreement between the two companies was signed in July 1996. But the company said last month that the deal had run into problems. It added yesterday that it had

CableComms Group—yesterday agreed a deal with General Instrument, the US electronics company, to supply set-top boxes for decoding digital TV.

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**B**OOKS



## A WORKING WEEK FOR: EDWARD GILLESPIE

## Job for stayer who can keep one jump ahead

Robert Miller meets a managing director determined to create the right atmosphere for a premier event in the racing calendar

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

ANYONE who has ever participated in a sporting event will tell you that preparation is all. If you don't get it right beforehand it is unlikely to come good on the day, as Edward Gillespie, the managing director of Cheltenham Racecourse, should know.

Next week 150,000 people will descend on the picturesque town of Cheltenham to celebrate the annual three-day festival of National Hunt racing. There may be swankier race meets, and no doubt richer pickings to be had elsewhere, but the Cotswold course is where the aficionados of the jump gather year after year to admire the horses, applaud the jockeys' bravery, meet old friends, drink and eat copious amounts, and generally enjoy the craic. Even those who are no longer able to make the trip maintain their links by having their ashes scattered over the course.

It is Gillespie's job to ensure that all the celebrants, led by their patron, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the Irish Ambassador and 5,000 fans of his fellow countrymen who make the annual pilgrimage, leave on Thursday evening with happy memories. A hotbed race, a stolen wallet or a lack of loos can spoil an otherwise memorable festival.

Besides the racing, culminating in Thursday's £200,000 Gold Cup sponsored by the Tote, the main talking point is likely to be the £10 million new grandstand to be opened officially by the Queen Mother on Wednesday. Topped by a panoramic restaurant, where tables and food cost between £345 and £395 a head, the grandstand represents racing in the 21st century.

The imposing new structure boasts a museum to past equine and human triumphs, including a mechanical horse for aspirant jockeys, corporate boxes, a spacious Irish theme bar complete with band, as well as the Tote and television screens. There are also superb viewing platforms for the disabled whose needs are recognised and incorporated around the course.

The grandstand will certainly be a major talking point and Gillespie is braced for some pithy views from the dihard traditionalists. One feature of the new building is the amount of room allocated to loos. That, says Gillespie, is at the insistence of Lord Vestey, the chair-

man, who mingles with the crowds on race days and listens to the feedback. Now the enormously spacious facilities have irreverently been dubbed "Sam's loos" after the chairman.

But the 44-year-old Gillespie, who once rode in an amateur race around the course to raise funds for Comic Relief, and came last, has to move with the times. Cheltenham has an annual turnover of nearly £10 million and Gillespie, a graduate from the University of York — "it had a decent racecourse" — with a degree in politics, presides over a flourishing business.

Around £6 million is generated directly by the festival, with a further £1.5 million indirectly from television and advertising, and the remainder from a dozen or so National Hunt racing days in the year. Additional revenue is raised from hiring out the grandstand for conferences and weddings. Already Gillespie has a weather-eye cocked to the next financing of the grandstand. "This new one replaced a stand built in the 1950s," he explains. "Nowadays they have about a 40-year life cycle."

Like any other businessman, Gillespie's working week has its fair share of bread-and-butter jobs. Cheltenham is just one of 12 courses, from Epsom and Aintree to Market Rasen and Huntingdon, owned by the Jockey Club through Racehorse Holdings Trust, and the managing director has to keep a tight control on budgets and administration. This particular working week runs from Monday to tomorrow, and has included daily tours of the grandstand, a special inspection of the Royal Box on Tuesday, security meetings with police on Thursday, and a briefing to staff supervisors yesterday. The first "star" to arrive was Imperial Call, last year's Gold Cup winner, who likes to make the journey from Ireland early to settle in and to establish territorial dominance.

One of Wednesday's more unusual jobs was to find accommodation, almost impossible during festival week when hotel prices double and people have to stay as far afield as Birmingham, for a French trainer and his wife.

"We have spent the last nine or ten months planning this year's festival and work actually begins on preparing the course in the first week of January. Every stage of the planning has to be communicated to the staff because it is vital that everyone actually knows what is going on," says Gillespie, who is married to



Ready for the off: Edward Gillespie, managing director of Cheltenham racecourse. "We have spent the last nine or ten months planning for the festival"

Alyson, a music teacher, and has three children, Siobahn, 17, George, 14, and Rosanna, 8. Gillespie has 14 full-time members of staff, swollen to thousands in the run-up to and during the racing. While the managing director roams all over the course, picking up a stray milk bottle, checking that plants will be in place on the front of the grandstand, worrying about a step up from the Irish Bar over which people might trip, Philip Arkwright, the clerk of the course, is patrolling the turf. Between them, Gillespie, Arkwright and Rosemary Hammond, who is in charge of sales, have clocked up an impressive 53 Cheltenham festivals.

The state of the course has been the subject of some controversy. Martin Pipe, the champion trainer, said on Wednesday that although the ground was not as fast

as many had feared, it was "pudding" in a number of places. Gillespie, who became a racecourse manager at the age of 22 "because, like many others, I was a frustrated jockey and not sufficiently brave", says of the course debate: "I'm not short of advice on what we should be doing."

If he should ever fancy a career in the City — although it is hard to envisage him cooped up in the Square Mile — Gillespie will not be short of contacts. Cheltenham boasts almost as many followers from the Mecca of money as it does from the Emerald Isle, and the tented village and boxes will be overflowing with a veritable Who's Who from the world of business and finance.

This year's list of Cheltenham supporters and backers includes Guinness, sponsors of Tuesday's £75,000 Arkle

Challenge Cup and the Pure Genius festival awards; Royal & SunAlliance, the insurer and sponsor of Wednesday's £75,000 steeplechase and £45,000 Novice Hurdle; and Vodafone, through its recent acquisition of the Aster Buzz Shop.

Vodafone, coincidentally, is the current sponsor of the Derby, and was signed up when Gillespie was in charge of the Epsom race for a two-year period. Indeed, it was he who led the somewhat controversial decision to move the event from its traditional Wednesday slot to Saturday. Of that decision he says: "We were trying to bring the Derby up-to-date in a very short period. Even if it does revert to Wednesday we still had to make a clear statement at that time and it has been very effective."

The name of the game, says Gillespie, is to create the right atmosphere for people

to meet each other in convivial surroundings but not to do deals other than betting, of course. Turnover on the Tote last year was almost £6 million and on the racecourse itself £1 million is gambled on each of the 20 races, in which some 360 horses will be running.

As most people look forward to a relaxing weekend Gillespie is girding himself for the climax of his working year. "The festival is a celebration of our sport. People come, dare I say it, for a fix. They are carried along on the emotion of it all and go away exhausted after three days of being totally immersed."

With 14,000 bottles of champagne, 20,000 bottles of wine and 50,000 bottles of beer, plus a lake of Guinness and Murphys, the task of cheering the winners and commiserating with the losers should not be too difficult.

## Building a new foundation for the hall of shame

Brockton Hall, the 18th-century stately home in Herefordshire, has seen more than its fair share of scandal in its 200-year history. In February last year, Lord Brockton, a polo-playing former Cavalry officer, was jailed for five years after admitting to a £4.5 million insurance fraud involving four classic Italian sports cars. The army of press photographers that invaded the estate relayed superb images of the handsome house and the tranquil Broadwater Lake.

But still waters run deep and Brockton Hall's future had been uncertain for some time. The disastrous combination of Lord Brockton's passion for acquiring expensive classic cars, and his determination to cling to the stately home that

he inherited as a 15-year-old at Eton, led him to attempt an inept insurance fraud in 1991 to counter mounting debts.

Lord Brockton is now in Ford open prison and last December Brockton Hall and its 534-acre estate and golf club were sold, on a 60-year lease, for £9 million to the CCA Group. The Hong Kong-based developer of luxury clubs and conference centres intends to spend £1 million developing the estate into a modern conference centre.

Brockton Hall was built between 1760 and 1775 by James Paine (1717-89), a great exponent of the English Palladian style, in the generation that followed Lord Burlington and William Kent. With Sir Matthew Laws as patron, Paine took on the remodeling of the property, which

had seen various incarnations since the first Brockton Hall was built on the site in 1239. Most accounts suggest that Paine's was a new house, although its form was dictated by that of its predecessor. That had been a building of three ranges around a courtyard open to the north. Paine added a fourth range and installed a large staircase.

The character of the house varied according to the contrasting lifestyles of two of its patrons. Sir Matthew Laws and later his son (who became Lord Melbourne), Sir Matthew was a successful attorney who came to architecture late in life. By the time of his death in 1768, only the

east and the new north range had been completed. The exteriors were relatively plain and the interiors were conservative in style.

His son was more socially ambitious and inclined to elaborate display. The south front he had built was grander in style and the principal rooms were finished with fine decorative ceilings. Grounds were landscaped, marble chimney pieces fitted and library bookcases designed by Chippendale (now one of only two examples remaining in the world). Cipriani, one of the 18th century's master craftsmen, was commissioned to paint the inset panels in the

library and the drawing room's elaborate ceilings.

The son's architectural and decorative efforts paid off and his social ambitions were realised when he became the 1st Lord Melbourne, though this was largely, it is said, achieved through the efforts of his wife, who was a mistress of the flamboyant Prince Regent. The Prince, later crowned George IV, was a frequent visitor to Brockton Hall and created the Chinese suite of rooms, now known as the Prince Regent Suite. He also presented his mistress with a Reynolds painting, which hangs in the ballroom, and had a racecourse laid out on the Brockton parkland.

The 2nd Lord Melbourne was married to Lady Caroline Lamb, known for her passion for Lord Byron. Lady Caro-

line also had a penchant for practical jokes. She once arranged for herself to be served up as a surprise dish at Lord Melbourne's grand ballroom birthday dinner — she emerged naked from a giant soup tureen.

Lord Melbourne eventually became Prime Minister and formed a close friendship with Queen Victoria, who often visited Brockton Hall. On his death, the hall passed to his sister, who married Lord Palmerston, who also became Prime Minister.

Given the high levels of public attention that Brockton Hall has attracted, CCA will no doubt be hoping for a period of calm and privacy in which to make the most of its investment.

JOANNA PITMAN



Brockton Hall awaits its future as a conference centre

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS



## STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

## Compass share price set to lift on entry to top 100

COMPASS, the contract caterer, ended the week on a flat note, with the price falling 15.2p to 706.4p as Accor, the French hotelier and its biggest shareholder, unloaded an 11.5 per cent holding.

But things should start to look up for Compass next week when it is admitted as a constituent of the top 100 companies. Such a move is almost certain to provide a boost to its share price, with confirmation of its appointment attracting the attention of the index-tracking funds.

Admission to the top 100 is calculated by the size of a company's stock market value. At the close of business last night Compass was valued at £2.29 billion. Others likely to be admitted to the exclusive band of constituent companies are Southern Electricity, unchanged at 440.4p and valued at £2.10 billion, British Land, 1p firmer at 538.2p (£2.5 billion) and Amvesco, formerly Invesco, 1.1p easier at 363.2p (£2.24 billion).

They are likely to replace Tate & Lyle, down 5.1p to 440.4p (£1.93 billion), Argos, 1.1p easier at 677.2p (£1.94 billion), Hanson, down 7p to 294.4p (£1.6 billion) and Smith & Nephew, unchanged at 183.3p (£2 billion).

By the close of business last night almost 40 million Compass shares had changed hands after Accor had executed a put through in 36.5 million shares at 700p.

The rest of the equity market continued to be squeezed higher, with share prices breaching the 4,400 level to end the week on another high note. Investors continued to take their lead from Wall Street, where a sharp rise in the employment numbers was offset by a subdued set of US average earnings. This reduced the pressure for a rise in interest rates.

As a result, the FT-SE 100 index ended just a shade below its best of the day with a rise of 21.0 at a closing high of 4,420.3. Over the week the index has risen 112 points. A total of 924 million shares were traded yesterday.

GKN opened sharply lower, touching 958.1p on the overnight news that a US court had ordered it to pay \$598 million compensation to settle the Meitake Mufflers dispute. The sum awarded was far higher than the worst-case scenario painted by the group earlier in the week after re-



Karren Brady of Birmingham City, launched on AIM at 58p

porting pre-tax profits of £368 million. The shares later bounced back to close 45.1p higher at £10.20 as brokers took the view that any further uncertainty had now been dispelled.

Reckitt & Colman fell 16p to 807.2p ahead of full-year figures next week as ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, downgraded its recommendation.

Hang on to your hats with Shield Diagnostics, down 6p to 602.1p, after its recent spectacular run. Followers say further positive news is on the way. A new broker will be appointed later this month as Shield begins a series of presentations. The shares are being talked another 200p higher before the end of the month.

There was big turnover in Redland as the price rose 8p to 372p with more than 13 million shares changing hands. A line of five million shares went through the market at the 370p level.

Brokers also reported large turnover in Asda, with 36.7 million traded as the price held steady at 110.1p. Word is that a number of brokers have begun to turn bearish of the shares, including Dresdner

Kleinwort Benson. Barclays Bank finished 3.1p better at £11.14 as it resumed buying back its own shares. It paid £1.12 each for a total of one million shares and has now acquired 22 million of the 26 million required to complete its buyback programme.

BT attracted support, rising 16.1p to 276p as dealers

A large trade conducted at a sharp discount to the ruling market price left Kingsbury Group, the retailer, nursing a 20p fall at 165p. A line of 500,000 shares went through the market on Thursday at 185p, compared with the then middle price of 204p.

One trader was trying frantically to sort out a bad trading position in Norcor as the price fell a further 6.1p to the low of 81.1p. Earlier this week shares in the building products group were unhinged by news of a disposal of 181,000 shares carried out by a main board director.

A profits warning left Hawtins 6p down at 40p, with interim losses predicted. GILT-EDGED: Bond prices in London spent much of the day tracking the performance of US Treasury bonds. After recovering from early falls, prices followed US T-bonds higher but failed to hold their best levels.

The June series of the long gilt finished three ticks better at £111.16 as a total of 94,000 contracts were completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on £1 at £105.4, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was a couple of ticks firmer at £103.72. NEW YORK: Shares were higher as Wall Street breathed a sigh of relief after the release of February employment figures that appeared to be no threat to wage levels or interest rates. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 58.49 points higher at 7,003.19.

## MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	Dow Jones	7003.19 (+58.49)
S&P Composite		806.85 (+8.29)
Tokyo:	Nikkei Average	18198.74 (+157.41)
Hong Kong:	Hang Seng	13377.35 (+79.01)
Amsterdam:	EOE Index	764.96 (+0.28)
Sydney:	ASX	2438.5 (-8.9)
Frankfurt:	DAX	3376.20 (+1.40)
Singapore:	Strait Times	2178.27 (+1.66)
Brussels:	General	12180.42 (+23.25)
Paris:	CAC 40	2708.28 (+9.36)
Zurich:	SKA Gen	962.80 (+1.50)
London:	FT 30	2923.24 (+8.38)
	FT 100	4420.3 (+21.0)
	FTSE Mid 250	4713.8 (+6.3)
	FTSE 350	2183.4 (+4.8)
	FTSE 1000	2001.1 (+1.2)
	FT All-Share	2153.44 (+8.19)
	FT Non Financials	2201.27 (+9.01)
	FT Fixed Interest	119.45 (+0.10)
	FT Govt Secs	95.7 (+0.19)
	Bargains	54.98
	SEAG Volume	924.2M
	US\$	1.6552 (+0.0002)
	German Mark	2.7590 (+0.0102)
	Exchange Index	95.1 (+0.3)
	Bank of England official base rate	6.00%
	EECU	1.4895
	11111	1.1714
	RPI	154.4 Jan (2.5%) Jan 1997=100
	RPIX	153.9 Jan (3.1%) Jan 1997=100

## RECENT ISSUES

Anglo-Weish	103.1	-
Anglo-Weish	139.1	-
Birmingham City	58	...
C&B Publishing	175	...
Calderdale Warrants	1	...
Cambridge Mini Res	14	...
Centrica (75%)	60.4	+2.1
Core Group	33.9	...
Energy Group (52%)	5.2	...
Grovenord Cash Sys	187.1	+5
Howle	30.1	...
Infobank Intl	174	+19
Nord Anglo Educum	165	-
Pad Group	28.3	-
Screen	6	...
TR Euro Gwth Writs	59.1	...
Technoplast	108	...
VFG	41.1	...

## MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:		
Norborn	252.1p (-18p)	
Acorn Comp	202.1p (-9p)	
Porvair	300.0 (+10p)	
Benchmark	256.1p (-7p)	
Ladbroke	243.1p (-7p)	
Fuji Bank Y	702.1p (-13p)	
Venoco	529.1p (-14p)	
Saga	659.1p (-17p)	
Prudential	598.1p (-15p)	
Tesco	547.1p (-7p)	
Redand	372.1p (-8p)	
Rank Grp	442.1p (-8p)	
Legal & Gen	419.1p (-7p)	
Mckeech	582.1p (-12p)	
Gard Grp	677.1p (-12p)	
Gumstons	455.1p (-7p)	
Telenor	83.1p (-2p)	
FALLS:		
Kingsbury Grp	165.1p (-20p)	
Talpa	165.1p (-12p)	
Peptide Thera	347.1p (-20p)	
Reckitt Colm	294.1p (-10p)	
Vesper Thomy	807.1p (-16p)	
Nat Aust Bk	785.1p (-13p)	
Scotia	805.1p (-10p)	
Photobank	427.1p (-12p)	
Marine	427.1p (-12p)	
Liberty Intl	492.1p (-12p)	
Thistle Hotels	186.1p (-6p)	
Kenwood App	133.1p (-8p)	
Norcor	81.1p (-6p)	
P & O Dtd	670.1p (-7p)	

Closing Prices Page 39

## TEMPUS

## Pensions for bears

IF PENSION provision is a worry for people, it could become a big headache for companies. The Pensions Act, parts of which come into force next month, puts more pressure on trustees to ensure that pension funds are adequately financed. Although many companies are still enjoying pension-fund holidays — a consequence of the 14-year bull market — the Act prescribes a minimum funding requirement (MFR) that could force trustees to make cash calls on companies if assets fall below the present value of the liabilities.

Typically, a UK pension fund is more than 80 per cent equities; a consequence of years of good share dividend growth and fund managers competing to outperform their peers. As long as the bull market continues and assets well exceed liabilities, that should not be a problem, but two factors could cause nervous trustees to demand a switch into fixed interest, and ultimately, a bigger contribution. The MFR could create a downward spiral. A falling equity market would encourage trust-

ees to demand a more conservative asset allocation; under the guidelines for an average pension scheme, gilts should make up 60 per cent of the assets. The consequence of an asset shift to gilts would be a flight from equities and falling shares, further depressing the asset value of UK pension funds, now heavily weighted towards shares. That could eventually lead to a flurry of cash calls on companies.

Such a grim scenario looks implausible only to those used to a rising market. There are other risks: a cash-hungry Labour Government might well withdraw the tax credit on dividends paid to pension funds. A reduction in cashflow to pension schemes of more than £4 billion can only increase pressure on trustees to ensure that schemes are fully funded. That means cash calls on mature, underfunded schemes. Sensible corporate treasurers will be taking put options on this bull market to protect their companies from the cost of a cash call.

## GKN

GKN, maker of the constant velocity joint, could have saved itself a huge amount of grief if it had settled the US damages case at the start. What was an insignificant legal problem has turned into a financial and public relations nightmare. Instead of celebrating its record profits this week, GKN managers had to justify their position over the conduct of a subsidiary years ago.

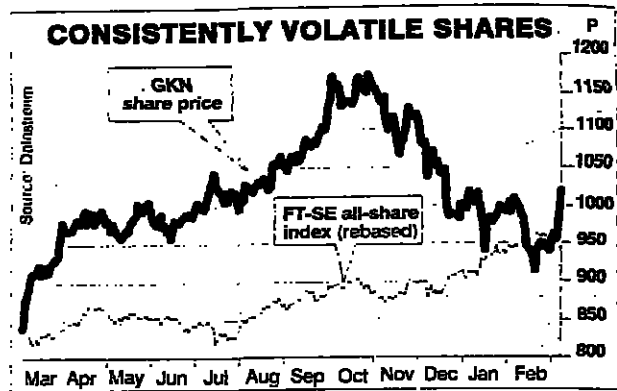
C. K. Chow, the new chief executive, tried to put the best gloss on it, but he must have been aggrieved that his promising start at the manufacturing group was marred by the previous decision to litigate.

The \$600 million damages judgment more than wiped out the year's profits of £363 million, requiring a provision in the accounts, some-

thing the company had previously refused to do. Nevertheless, GKN is appealing against the judgment and must hope that the provision is not taken as a sign of weakness.

As far as investors are concerned, their worries about the dividend are unwarranted. GKN's cash pile is large

enough to pay Thursday's award of damages. Mr Chow has put his name behind the dividend. With the worst-case scenario provided for, the share market has finally taken heart from the company's record results — no mean achievement in a depressed automotive components market — and given the shares a boost.



## Sears/Littlewoods

EVEN if Sears does not squeeze an extra penny from the prospective new buyer of Freemans, it will be jolly pleased to complete a deal. Referral of the Littlewoods transaction to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission put a damper on Liam Strong's efforts to restore his own and the company's credibility. Plans for a jumbo distribution to shareholders are on hold. Sears may experience some Schadenfreude in making another retailer look foolish but the real reason to spurn Littlewoods is to escape the MMC. A combination of Littlewoods and Freemans would have more than 30 per cent of the market with huge savings from combining distribution and call centres. Hence, the interloper is likely

to be another mail order operator rather than a high street retailer. Suspicion falls on N Brown, the direct mail order specialist. It would enjoy a quantum leap in market share by taking on Freemans's agency business. Otto Versand, the German group that owns Grattan, is a candidate; merging the two should fall short of the 25 per cent limit.

In hindsight, it is scarcely surprising that Sears kept its options open and that Littlewoods has been gazzumped. Mail order businesses are prized among retailers desperate for ideas. Whether the assets will ever achieve more than their past pedestrian performance is another matter.

Bae ONE of the property sector's little mysteries is why British

Aerospace continues to hang on to Arlington Securities. Bae paid £278 million for the business park developer in 1989. The idea was that Arlington would turn Bae's vast tracts of surplus land into cash but the recession intervened and demand for office space plummeted. Leaving Bae nursing losses.

The policy, says Bae, is to run Arlington's £500 million portfolio for cash, but the property market has changed.

City centres are no longer littered with empty office blocks and the share prices of property companies are at huge premiums.

Bae could probably package Arlington's assets and get more than their net worth in a flotation. Such a window of opportunity may not last long.

EDITED BY CARL MORTIMER

## MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current price	Week's change	Notes
Commercial Union	+732.1p	Revised bid speculation
PPL Therapeutics	+422.1p	Govt withdrawal funding
Forward Group	+225.1p	PCB bids £128 million
Michael Page	+170.1p	£240 million takeover
MFI Furniture	+157.1p	Slowdown in sales growth
Mackie International	+151.1p	Bid talks terminated
Tomorrow's Leisure	+94.1p	Bid approach
Calson Energy	+57.1p	Bid speculation
Kingsbury Group	+165.1p	Seller at big discount

## COMMODITIES

COMMODITIES			
ICIS-LOR (London 8:00pm)			
CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)			
Brent Physical Intermediate	19.75	-0.40	
WTAS Intermediate (Apr)	20.00	-0.90	
WTAS Intermediate (May)	20.00	-0.90	
WTAS Intermediate (June)	20.00	-0.90	
WTAS Intermediate (Sept)	21.25	-0.30	
WTAS Intermediate (May)	21.10	-0.50	
PRODUCTS (\$/MT)			
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)			
	Bid	Offer	
Premium Unif	206 (+1)	208 (+1)	
Lowall Eth	190	192	
3.5 Fuel Oil	80 -2	82 -3	
Naphtha	140 (+5)	142 (+8)	
IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)			
GAS OIL			
Mar	170.50-57.75	Jul	172.90-57.75
Apr	168.75-57.00	Jul	173.30 SLR
May	171.50-57.15	Jul	174.00 SLR
Brent (.000pm)			
Mar	20.00 SLR	Jul	19.40 Bid
Apr	19.75-75	Aug	19.20 Bid
Jun	19.57 Bid	Jul	19.5125
OFFSHORE (Promo prev day)			
Copper Gde A (Trombe)			
Mar	100.00	Jul	100.00
Sept	98.00	Jul	98.00
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Sept	9		



# WEEKEND MONEY

## How to invest and play a part in films

**TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR**

**Caroline Merrell and Anne Ashworth** provide a guide for last-minute Pep buyers

# How to scale Pep heights

■ **Where do I get a Pep?** It is arguable that there is just too

■ **How much do Peps cost?**  
The uninitiated can be surpris-

■ **Can I get a discount on a Pep?** The Pep discount houses should be able to arrange for you to buy your Pep at a lower cost, by rebating to you some of the commission paid to middlemen by Pep providers.

Among those offering discounts are Elson (0500 691790) and Pep Discount (0500 498477).

City Deal (01708 75214) and

■ I have a portfolio of Peps built up over several years, which means I have a big exposure to the UK market – is there anything I can do? If you are concerned that the UK market is set for a downturn, you should, in theory, be able to transfer each yearly PEP allowance to another PEP. For

time, to invest by the full 1996-97 allowance. Unfortunately, the administration systems at some Pep providers are making this very difficult.

According to Sheila Brickell, an analyst with Allenbridge, the Pep research house, some companies will separate out amounts invested in different tax years, while others will bundle all the amounts together.

She advised those planning to buy a Pep to make sure the fund manager has a big range of funds that would allow a switch, or offered "unbundled" Peps. Those who invest in a Pep via a savings plan will almost certainly not be able to transfer to another manager.

■ Which Peps should I choose? The simplest option is to ask the experts who spend all year examining the performance of Peps from every angle and the competence of the fund managers employed by Peps providers.


the growth funds, 25 per cent in the UK smaller companies fund and 25 per cent in the Asian smaller companies fund. We also recommend Gartmore for growth—a mixture of the European Selective Opportunities Fund, UK smaller companies, Pacific growth and American emerging.\* For income, he recommends Guinness Flight and Jupiter.

1

# Braced for tax relief blow

Mr Gumpel also pointed out that the six million or so

Those coming up to the end of the tax year, who have not



1990

11

100


11

## The soufflé syndrome

In London, short-term interest rates are rising gently, which reinforces those nervous enough to keep their cash. But long-term interest rates are falling and they are ultimately more important for share prices. Over the past year, yields on typical 15-year government gilt-edged stocks have fallen from about 8.3 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Low inflation is becoming credible. From the start of January, yields fell from about 7.8 to 7.25 per cent in mid-February before tweaking up again. A healthy, gilt-edged market augurs a healthy share market, except in recession. Britain is enjoying its sixth straight year of

\_\_\_\_\_

This is where the fear comes in. Wall Street's boom was fuelled fundamentally by retirement funds. But people are asking who has been blowing in all this extra hot air. Fingers point at speculative hedge funds, borrowed to the hilt in yen loans costing next to nothing, and therefore riding free on any increase in stock prices, however vertiginous. Even modest extra gains, multiplied by their loan gearing, will yield good returns – until, that is, the process goes into reverse and the shuffle sinks.



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**GROUP OF "Pren**  
**INTELLIGENCE AID WEIGHT**  
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**MICROFAL INVESTMENT**  
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and 10 years

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stars in 10 years  
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to information on Fidelity's MoneyBuilder Growth  
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**GROWTH PEP**

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PEP allowance, so contact us

bridge, West Tnli 902. Please send the  
PEP. We will not disclose any information

1

# DON'T TRACK THE INDEX. BEAT IT.

UK UNIT TRUSTS	ENTRY CHARGES	EXIT CHARGES*	ANNUAL MANAGEMENT FEE	12/98 TO 3/07	3/04 TO 3/07
FIDELITY MONEYBUILDER GROWTH	0%	0%	1%	+21.3%	+61.6%
HSBC - THE FOOTSTOCK FUND	0%	0%	1%	+16.6%	+32.6%
VIRGIN GROWTH (UK INDEX)	0%	0%	1%	+16.5%	N/A
LEGAL & GENERAL UK INDEX	0%	0%	0.5%	+16.0%	+37.1%
FTSE-A ALL SHARE INDEX	N/A	N/A	N/A	+17.2%	+37.8%

MONEY OBSERVER UNIT TRUST AWARDS 2008  
Winner of "Premier Group" award

\*  
INTELLIGENCE GROUP WEIGHTED PERFORMANCE GOING UP (DOWN) OVER 1 YEAR  
Number 1 over 2 years, 4 years and 10 years

\*  
MICROCAP INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE AWARD 2008  
1st Fidelity European Trust over 10 years in UK Unit Trusts category  
1st MoneyBuilder PLUS over 5 years in UK Unit Trust Fund of British Stocks

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like all our MoneyBuilder PEPs, MoneyBuilder Growth has no entry or exit charges.\*

Remember though, you only have until April 5th to take advantage of this year's tax-free PEP allowance, so contact us now or speak to your IFA.

To: Fidelity Investments, PO Box 98, Tootingbridge, Kent TN11 9DL Please send the information on Fidelity's MoneyBuilder Growth PEP. We will not disclose any information outside the Fidelity Marketing Group.


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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

TM043

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all free from 0pm. \*taxes. Fax: 01737 836 960. <http://www.fid-int.com/uk>

**PEP NOT AVAILABLE AFTER OPEN 9 AM - 6 PM 7 DAYS**

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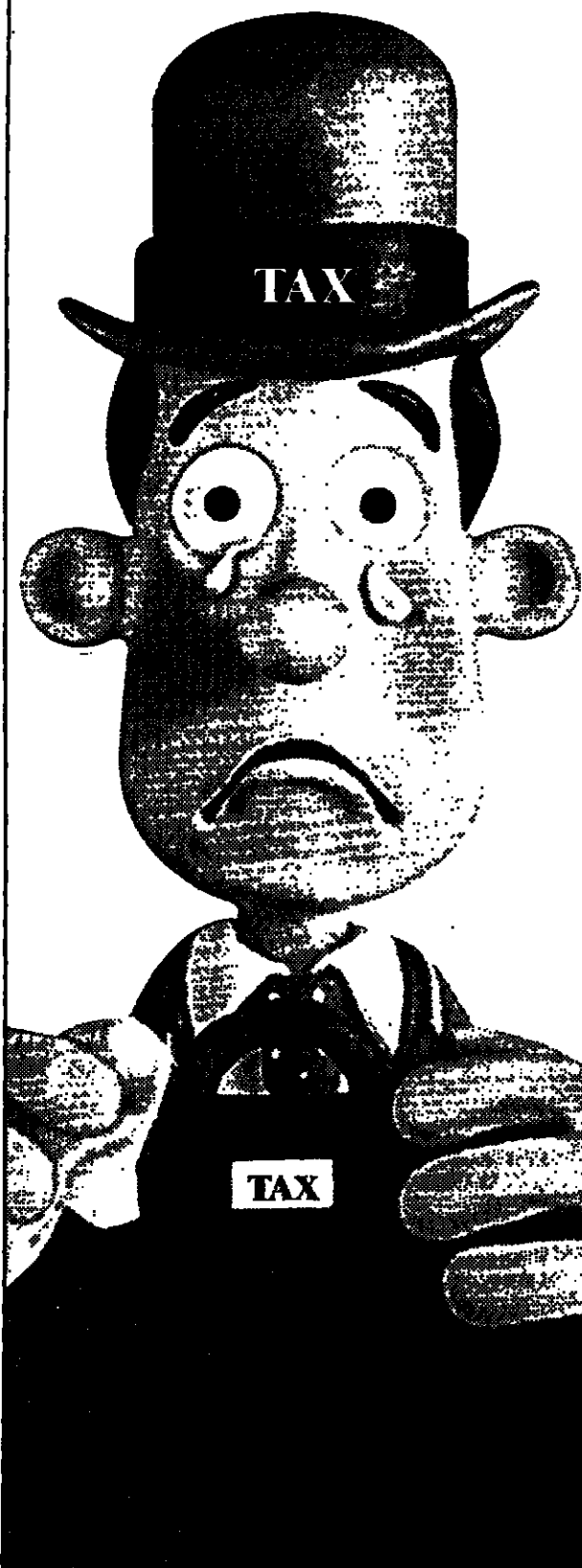
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Britannia House Leek, Staffordshire ST13 5RG.

Helen Pridham says the public is become immune to the benefits of health cover

## Medical insurers seek cold cure

In spite of growing public concern about the NHS, fewer people have been signing up for private medical insurance during recent years. According to the Association of British Insurers, the number of people with this type of insurance fell by 25 per cent between 1990 and 1995 - from 7.6 million to 5.7 million.

Now a number of new schemes have been launched which insurers hope will reverse the trend. The answers that providers have come up with in order to attract new customers and tempt old ones back to private medical insurance could not be more different. One of the most controversial plans has been brought out by Western Provident Association (WPA). It offers lower premiums in return for policyholders agreeing to pay the first part of their medical costs themselves.

Guardian Direct, on the other hand, has come up with a scheme that virtually guarantees you receive part of your premiums back each year, while Prime Health has gone for a no-frills approach. WPA's new 2-4-1 policy offers substantial premium reductions to customers if they are prepared to pay the first £1,000, £2,000 or £4,000 of their private medical bills during any one year. Couples who take out the policy will both have to pay the chosen excess and if they have any children a £250 excess will also be applied.

In spite of these hefty contributions to costs, you will be accepted only if you can prove that you are living a "demonstrably healthy lifestyle". You will be asked questions about your height, weight, smoking and drinking habits, and the level of exercise you take. This will be checked each year and WPA reserves the right not to renew your policy if



Shaping up: some policies will accept you only if you can prove you have a "demonstrably healthy lifestyle".

you have fallen badly by the wayside. But independent advisers are sceptical about WPA's new product.

George Connelly of Healthcare Matters, a Dorset adviser, said: "I welcome innovation but I honestly question the willingness of people to pay such high excesses. Other policies already offer excesses on a smaller scale and although some people like the idea initially, they often get frustrated because it cuts down on how often they can claim. Not being able to claim on a policy is a major reason for lapses." For those who are interested, however, Mr Connelly points out that the other insurers which offer the option of

less onerous excesses also charge more competitive premiums without "cherry-picking" the very healthy.

"Take a single person aged 35 living in London. Under a WPA plan with a £2,000 excess, the annual premium would be £494.95. Compare that to a OHRA Medios policy for London with an excess of just £324 on which the premium would be £415.02 or to a Prime Health Primecare policy with a £250 excess and a 25 per cent no claims discount which would cost £389.43. Both policies offer benefits which compare reasonably and are renewable regardless of health."

The lack of certainty about what consumers actually want is shown

by the fact that Guardian Direct, in launching its new private medical insurance product last week, has adopted a completely opposite approach to WPA. GD, which until now has sold mainly car and household insurance over the phone, has launched a policy which aims to ensure that small claims can be made frequently in order to create customer loyalty. It will pay out up to £30 per person per policy year for dental and optical check-ups and £12 per person per year for prescription charges. New policyholders will also be covered for existing ailments or complaints suffered in the past five years as soon as a fixed two-year

period is up - even if the complaint occurred during time and they received treatment for it. Normally such moratoriums stipulate no follow-up treatment during the waiting period.

A choice of two levels of cover is available under Guardian's scheme, one which pays outpatient costs - the Standard Plan - and one which does not - the Value Plan. Full refunds of the cost of treatment are provided under each scheme. Unlike many other low-cost schemes, the number of hospitals where treatment can be obtained is reasonably large, with more than 500 on the list. Guardian's plan is similar to a scheme launched last year by Legal & General that also provides cash contributions towards the cost of dental and optical treatment and alternative medicine.

Legal & General has just added an outpatient cover option to its plan. Cash benefits may be attractive but Stephen Walker, of Medical Insurance Services of Brighton, thinks insurers should approach the matter of customer loyalty differently. He said: "I believe the best way to retain customers is to keep the premiums down, particularly in later life. Lower premiums have been achieved by Prime Health by cutting back the comprehensive cover offered under its main Primecare plan with a new Saver and Supersaver plan.

The "frills" it has removed include cover for psychiatric and mental conditions, alternative medicine, home nursing, complications of pregnancy and oral surgery. In addition, the Supersaver plan excludes all outpatient treatment which precedes inpatient or day care treatment.

## Payout solid from the Rock

SOCIETY WATCH



The average share payout by the Northern Rock Building Society, the smallest of those planning to convert into a bank, could be as high as £1,400. This sum has been boosted by the soaring stock market, and recent rises in the share price of the Abbey National, the most comparable share.

This week, the Northern Rock unveiled plans for its £1.2 billion flotation, scheduled for October. Around 900,000 members will benefit from an equal distribution of

500 free shares with an estimated price per share of between 260p and 295p - if the society had floated on February 7.

Those who qualify for the free shares will be those investors who had £100 in their account on December 31 last year and who had a credit balance on the voting date. They must also have had £50 in their accounts on April 2. Qualifying borrowers will be those who have £100 worth of mortgage debt on December 31 last year and on the voting date. Investing

members who are not entitled to vote may be entitled to receive a statutory cash bonus that will be a percentage of the total balance in the share accounts. This is expected to be around 8.5 per cent.

In announcing the deal, the Northern Rock attempted at the same time to tackle the controversy surrounding the disabled. Under the terms of the other building society flotations, many disabled savers have been locked out of payouts

because their accounts are looked after by trustees - only the first named on accounts benefit. Douglas French, Conservative MP for Gloucester, is in the process of bringing in a Bill to ensure that the disabled benefit from building society payouts.

The Northern Rock intends to make a donation of £1 million to charities for the disabled and their carers. The move has been broadly welcomed by Mr French.

The Northern Rock decided to go for an equal distribution of shares, as predicted

in *The Times*, rather than a variable distribution because it claims that eight out of ten of its members would be better off. In offering an equal distribution of shares, the Northern Rock is following the Alliance & Leicester model, rather than the variable distribution offered by the Woolwich and the Halifax.

Members will be asked to vote at the special general meeting in Newcastle Arena on April 15. Postal votes should be returned by midnight on April 2. The North-

ern Rock is also setting up a charitable foundation, called the Northern Rock Foundation, that will help projects in the North East.

After flotation, the society will pay 5 per cent of its profits annually into the foundation, equivalent to £8 million last year.

CAROLINE MERRELL

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## Season opens for watchdog trials

Nine years ago the Securities and Investments Board (SIB) assumed the task of protecting the nation's savings. Its actions over the next few weeks will prove whether the City watchdog is fit to carry out this vital duty for the rest of the century and beyond.

This week the formidable Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, informed Sir Andrew Large, the SIB's chief executive, that she expected a quick resolution to the personal pension scandal.

The SIB's conduct in this affair so far has revealed its most serious flaws. The organisation stood by while hundreds of thousands of employees were encouraged by life insurance salesmen to leave company schemes with good benefits for inferior personal pension plans.

Once the abuses came to light, the SIB failed to investigate the affair swiftly. It has also failed to ensure



COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH

Personal Finance Editor

that all victims of the scandal received prompt compensation for loss and misleading advice. The SIB's performance has been shameful, giving every excuse for the insurance companies to delay payments. The watchdog has been expert at passing the buck, rather than taking the blame. The result is that about £50 million is all that has been offered in compensation from an estimated bill of £4 billion.

Before the end of the month, Sir Andrew must be able to show that the

worst culprits among the insurers are closer to meeting their compensation liabilities.

Those awaiting a payout may have grounds for optimism about these discussions. Both sides have an impetus to end the delays. Sir Andrew is already due to stand down from his post in May. He will not wish to leave in an atmosphere of opprobrium.

The insurance companies, meanwhile, will be driven by the only force they understand: the potential for

new business. Under the Government's proposals to reform the state pension scheme, a selected number of companies will be entitled to invest the compulsory contributions of the next generation of workers (see page 36).

Since no insurance company will wish to be excluded from this list, they will be eager to present themselves as models of propriety and customer care. The same commercial pressures that caused the pensions debacle could hasten its resolution. But the doubts will remain over the SIB's fitness for its role.

### Small comfort

NATIONAL SAVINGS has heeded the requests of *Weekend Money* readers for more smaller-value Premium Bond prizes (see page 33). But for small holders, Ernie's odds remain deplorable.



Second-hand rose: the market for second-hand clothes has never been stronger thanks to Swampy and friends, like that for second-hand policies

## Tep specialists enjoy boom time

Continued speculation over which insurers will follow Norwich Union into demutualisation is creating a boom time for the six investment trusts specialising in traded endowment policies (Teps).

Funds such as the Life Offices Opportunities Trust (Loot) buy endowments on the secondary market to collect the bonuses mutual insurers pay on these policies. They are also in line for any windfall bonuses if these companies float on the stock market.

This has caught the imagination of investors who have piled into the trusts, pushing their shares to a premium, a rare feat in the neglected investment trust sector, where discounts of more than 10 per cent are common. Look, run by Scottish Value Management,

is the most popular at an 8.4 per cent premium. But the five other Tep funds from Kleinwort Benson and Barclays Global Investors also have more buyers than sellers and stand at 5.8 per cent premiums.

Beware, buying a trust at premium means you pay over the odds for the underlying value of the assets. However, Brian Moretta, investment analyst at SVM, points out that investment trusts have never stayed at premiums for long — either the funds fall out of fashion or someone launches a new trust to tap the demand.

It could be worth waiting for share prices to dip, or you may decide the opportunity is too good to squander. Even if other life companies do not demutualise, Tep funds are a relatively low-risk way of getting good capital returns

over the long term. Beale Dobie, a market-maker in traded endowments, says the average return on endowments last year was around 9 per cent. This is unlikely to decline as most insurers have stopped cutting bonuses and Tep funds invest in better-value longer-dated (25-year) policies. All Tep funds will pay out when they wind up early in the next century. This fixed timetable makes them useful if you are planning school or university fees. Barclays' two BZW Endowment funds avoid a potential capital gains problem by splitting the capital payments and bonuses over the last five years. Some are Peppable. For instance you can put up to £3000 in the SEC Traded Endowment Fund.

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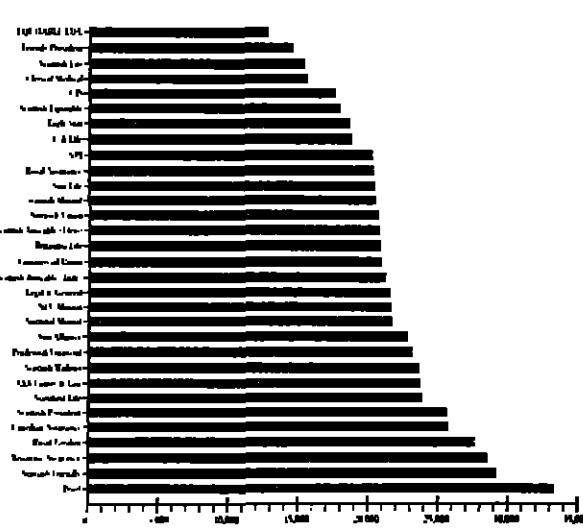
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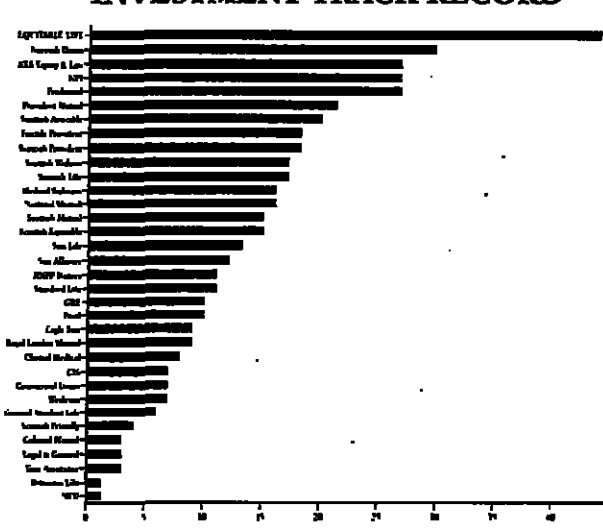
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Source: Financial Savings surveys of regular contribution with-profits personal pension plans, 1974-1996

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### A QUESTION OF MONEY

## Do you suffer from confusion over cashbacks?

The intricate accounting policies of building societies used to be of interest only to the keenest type of accountant. However, in the next few months about 20 million people will become shareholders in four of the top ten building societies as they float on the stock market.

Shareholders will receive details of the newly floated banks' profits and losses, any new acquisitions, plus details of how the businesses are progressing. All these factors can have a big impact on the share prices. Shareholders will have to try to make sense of some of the more obscure methods of accounting.

It is increasingly clear that the way in which building societies treat cashbacks in their accounts is causing problems for some of the analysts who follow the market.

This week the Halifax reported that it had spent £626 million on mortgage sweeteners, including cashbacks and discounted rates, while the Alliance & Leicester spent £143 million on cashbacks and other incentives. However, other societies' treatment of incentives in their accounts may not have quite the same impact on profits.

**Q** What is actually meant by a cashback?

**A** Many building societies have attempted to attract new borrowers by offering a cash lump sum up front. As these payments are a cost, they have to be accounted for in the society's profit and loss account.

**Q** How are they treated by different societies?

**A** Some building societies, such as the Halifax, will write off the cashback in the year that the cash is given to the customer. A £3,000 cashback will show up as a £3,000 cost in the society's profit and loss account. Other societies, such as the Northern Rock, will write off the

cashback over a period of three years.

**Q** Why should it matter that cashbacks are treated differently by societies?

**A** The fact that different societies have different policies makes it very difficult to compare their profits. It also makes it difficult to compare the profits of one society on a continuing basis.

For example, Northern Rock reported a 14 per cent increase in profits to £167.5 million for last year — very healthy growth. This building society does around one third of its lending on a cashback basis. However, if cashbacks are written off in the year they occur, rather than over three years, then Northern Rock's profits would be £39 million lower, and be less than the previous year.

**Q** How do societies justify writing off cashbacks over more than one year?

**A** The societies point out that although they are paying a large lump sum up front, borrowers will have to pay back a proportion of this in the first few years of the loan if they choose to redeem their mortgage.

Therefore, lenders do have some cover against the initial cost. Northern Rock also points out that other societies offer discounted loans rather than cashbacks, where the charges are written off over a period of years.

**Q** So what is the solution for cashbacks?

**A** Many of those in the industry believe that societies should all be forced to account for their cashbacks on a standard basis. Some analysts believe that the most prudent basis should be used, ie, the liability should all be written off in the year it occurs.

CAROLINE MERRELL

## Left in the dark about payment protection

Untrained staff at banks and building societies are failing to explain the terms of policies sold to borrowers to cover mortgage payments if they fall ill or lose their jobs (Sara McConnell writes).

Publishing his annual report, Walter Merricks, the Insurance Ombudsman, said: "The extent of the cover is often not properly explained. For the most part, policies of this sort are sold by staff untrained in the selling of insurance."

Borrowers are under increasing pressure to take out insurance with their mortgages as the Government restricts state help to unemployed or ill borrowers. Since October 1995, new borrowers have had to wait nine months before they

can claim help with mortgage repayments. But the policies on offer have been widely attacked by Citizens' Advice Bureaux and housing experts as expensive and inadequate.

Of the complaints received by Mr Merricks this year, 12 per cent involved payment protection policies. Four years ago there were none.

The ombudsman's concern is shared by the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux. The main criticisms centre on "exclusion times" during which the policy will not pay out, restrictive definitions of what constitutes a pre-existing medical condition and perceived discrimination against unemployed people on training schemes.

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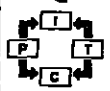
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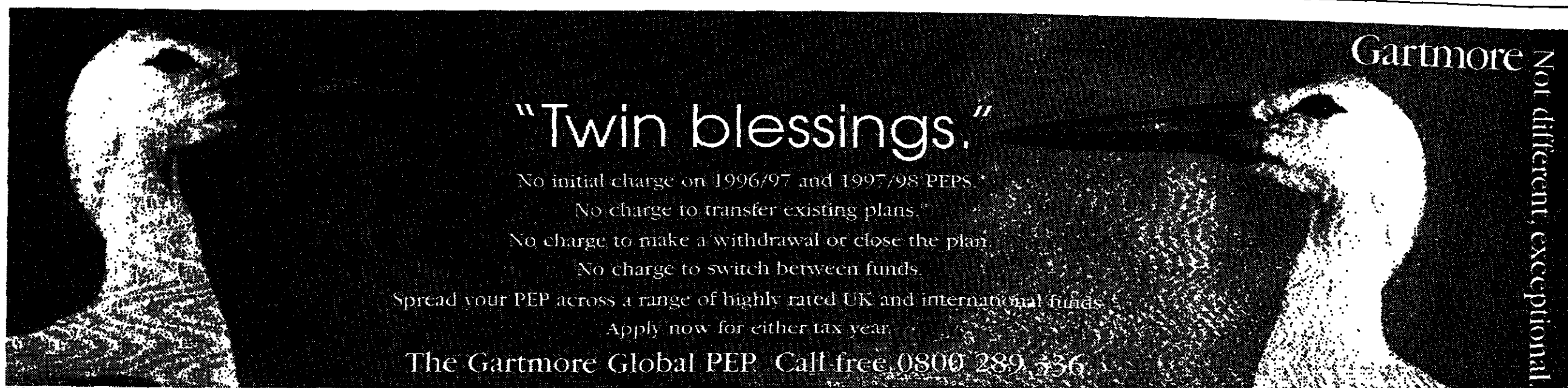
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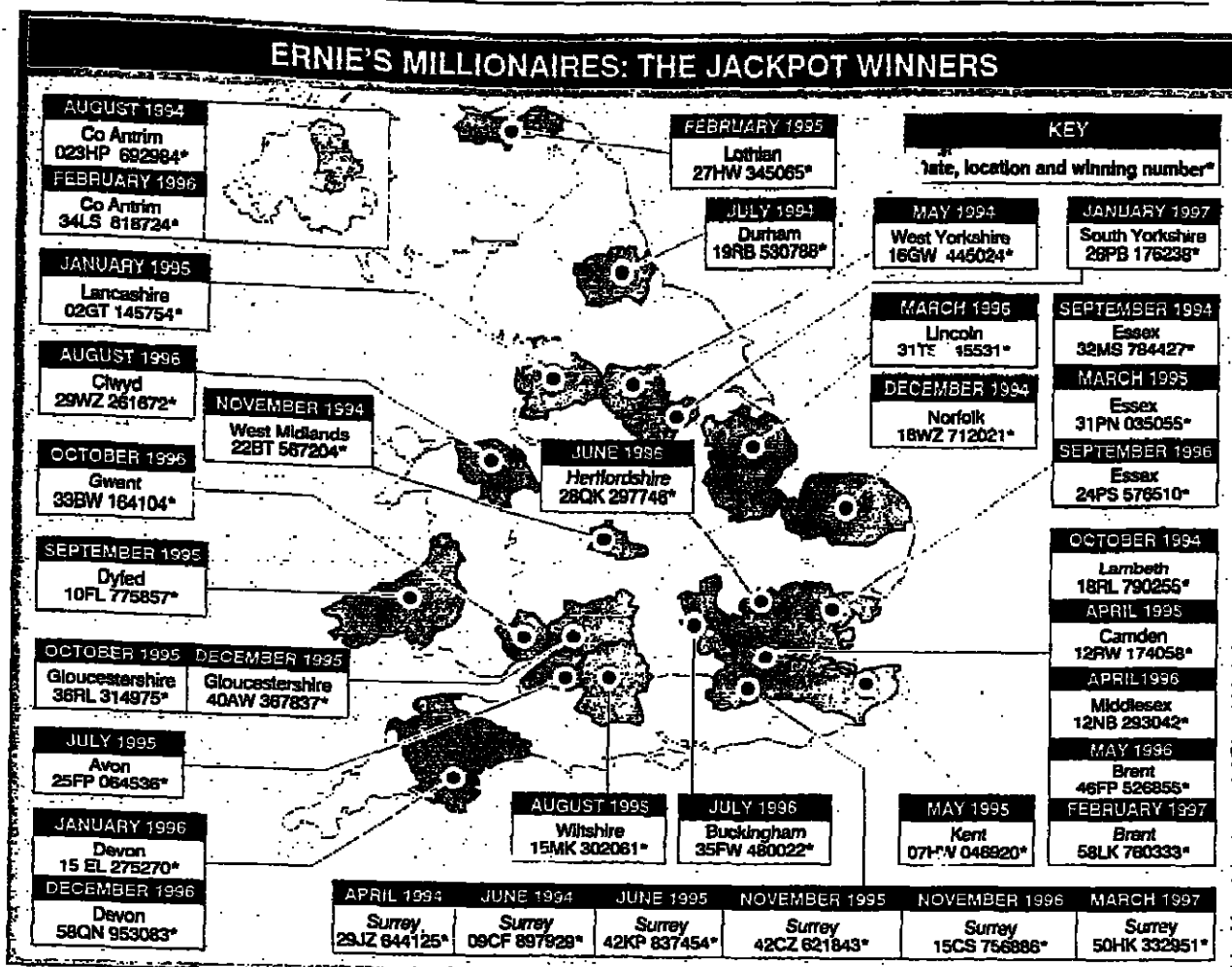


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# Sara McConnell on a campaign that bore fruit



## Turning Ernie into a nice little earner

The odds on winning the Premium Bonds improved significantly this week, as National Savings bowed to pressure from readers of *The Times* and others demanding more chance of regular, small prizes.

Many Weekend Money readers have been angered by National Savings' move last May to abandon fixed odds but pay a fixed number of prizes. Coupled with booming sales, this meant bigger wins for a lucky few but less chance of a £50 or £100 win for others. Now National Savings is reversing this strategy.

Frank Yule, who accused National Savings in Weekend Money letters two weeks ago of turning Premium Bonds from an investment into a lottery, welcomed the volte-face as "excellent news". Since his letter was published, Mr Yule has received letters of support from *Times* readers across the country.

From June, any £1 Bond will have a fixed, one-in-19,000 chance of winning any prize, including the £1 million jackpot. This month, under the present structure, the odds were one in 22,320. National Savings said: "Based on these odds, a person with a maximum holding

of £20,000 of Premium Bonds could expect with average luck to win 11 prizes a year. At the new fixed odds of 19,000 to 1, the same investor might expect over a period of time to win an average of 13 prizes a year."

Currently, there is a pre-set limit of 350,000 prizes. Under the new structure there will be no set number of prizes but based on the level of sales in March there will be an estimated 430,000 payouts. The prize fund, currently standing at £7.7 billion, will continue to be divided into three bands. Three quarters of the fund will go in small prizes of £50 and £100, while a further 15 per cent will be allocated to prizes of £1,000 and £500. The remaining 10 per cent will go to fund the biggest prizes of £5,000 and £1 million.

National Savings admitted this week that its attempts to offer fewer, larger prizes had been partly designed to compete with the National Lottery.

Since the £1 million jackpot was announced in November 1993, sales have shot up to £6.6 billion, more than the total sales in the 40 years since Ernest Maples, then Postmaster-General, pressed Ernie's start button for the first time. But many

longstanding bondholders see their holdings as investments, not lottery punts. Mr Yule and his wife Priscilla, who have the maximum £20,000 in Premium Bonds, used to win small prizes regularly. But he said: "For the last two months we haven't won anything. We used to get quite a good return."

Another Weekend Money reader, Denys Manning, agreed: "I think most people would rather have a stream of smaller prizes, as well as a flutter." Mr Manning, who has complained to National Savings about the existing prize structure, welcomed the changes, saying: "I didn't think they would listen."

But National Savings will have a harder job convincing holders that there is no secret bias towards newer holdings or those in the South of England. This month's millionaire is from Surrey and the Bond was entered in the draw for the first time. Of the 36 millionaires, six are from Surrey, with three from Essex. Ernie has no favourites, however. There are more winners in the South because more bonds are bought in the South.

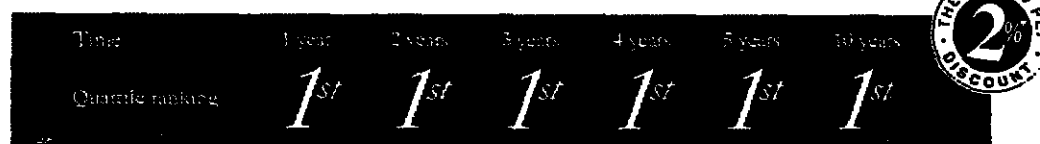


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Investors Chronicle 24th January 1997

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The M&G Corporate Bond PEP

Lizanne Rose gets a front-row ticket to a premiere

## So you want to be in the movies?

If you have ever dreamt of being in the movies, a company in Stratford-upon-Avon could make your dreams come true. For a £500 investment in a new production of *King Lear*, to be filmed this summer, you would be entitled to a share in 50 per cent of any net profits, full repayment of your money within a set period, the option to receive a credit in the film's titles, a ticket to the premiere, and the chance to be in the film.

Bob Carruthers, managing director of Cromwell Productions, first had the idea of extra-financed movies when shooting a television documentary about battles. The sight of the extras covered in mud and brandishing swords made him realise that it was but a step away from making movies. Cromwell's first venture was *Chasing the Deer*, a film dramatising the Battle of Culloden. Some 270 people each invested £500 in the project.

*The Bruce*, with Oliver Reed in the title role, followed in 1995 and *Macbeth*, filmed last summer, will be released in May. Jason Connery and Helen Baxendale play Lord and Lady Macbeth. Cromwell Productions has chosen classics as there will always be a market for this type of entertainment in Britain and abroad.

Mr Carruthers said: "We feel strongly that the films should be substantial, well crafted and stylishly produced. We knew there would be a continuing demand for the subjects of the first two films, which were both driven by a passion the Scots have for their history and culture, and clearly there is healthy demand for the Shakespearean tragedies. Shakespeare works equally well in art house

cinemas, on television, video or CD-Rom. Also any play by Shakespeare contains battle, banquet or ball scenes, with walk-on parts for investors."

Mr Carruthers compares film investment to having a share in a racehorse, but with the bonus of being able to take part in the race. But he emphasises the risk. There is no guarantee that capital invested in *King Lear* debentures will be returned, and there will be no share of the profits if sufficient revenue is not generated.

Paul Foster, 36, who owns his own company, invested £1,000 and has appeared as a peasant, a body and a soldier in *Macbeth*. "I had always been interested in films and was looking to invest, but didn't know how to. You hear that films require backers but never how to go about it."

Dr Ian Blake, a retired teacher, also put money into *Macbeth*. He said: "There is the assumption that you are likely to lose it. My friends thought I was rather dotty but I felt it was a fun thing to do." He thought there was likely to be great interest in *Macbeth* but even if it did not do well at the box office, schools always need such films. Another investor was Tanya Harrison, 21. She said: "It was a wonderful chance to get on set and worth the sacrifices to do it."

£750,000 has been invested by enthusiasts in the productions so far. A two-year wait can be expected for returns. The first return of £25.52 was paid in April 1996 to *Chasing the Deer* shareholders. A second follows this April.

Cromwell Productions is on 01789 415187.



Enthusiasts have put up £750,000 for films like *King Lear*

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# Merits of overseas markets re-emerge

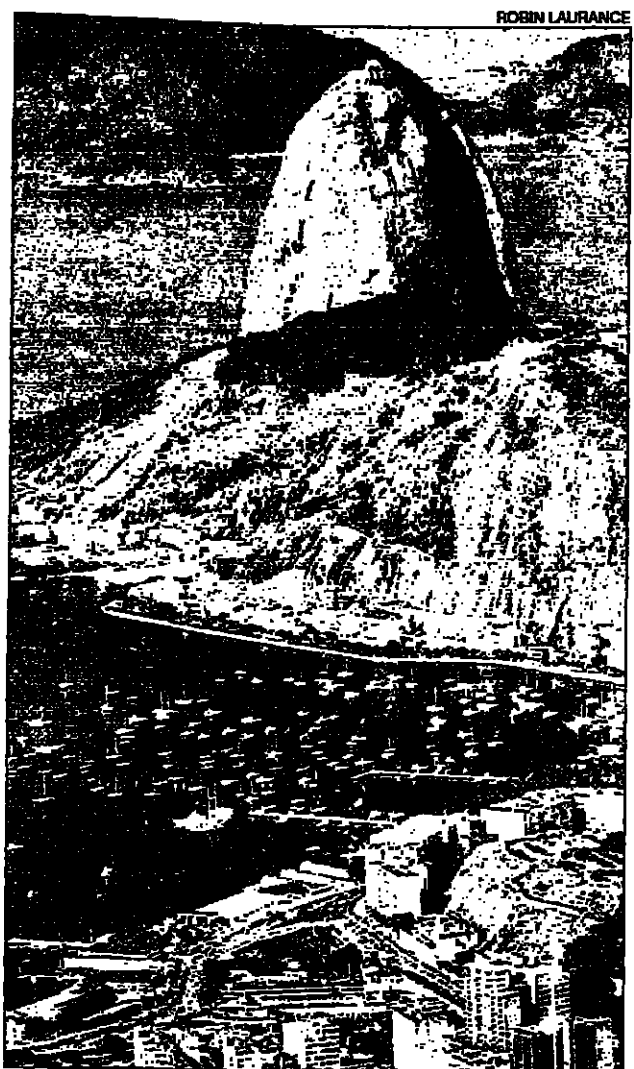


The dazzling fears of the FTSE 100 continue to hold the attention of most investors. Despite political concerns, the index of leading shares hit another record this week. However, in some quarters, attention is turning to the emerging markets of Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, the performance of which have lagged behind London and New York.

Latin American markets have never fully recovered from the traumatic collapse of the Mexican peso three years ago, which sent overseas investors scurrying home. Many of these countries have had their problems compounded by the strengthening dollar, which has made manufactured exports more expensive. Among the Asian markets, Korea and Thailand suffered badly in 1996 as a result of political problems. Thailand, a popular market in the early Nineties, was hit by concerns about its banking sector.

Since 1994 the MSCI Emerging Markets index has fallen by 10 per cent, while the UK, Europe and US have powered on to record heights. But Edward Hocknell, fund manager at Baillie Gifford, the Scottish investment house, says it is buying time again. In addition, the bruising experience of the past few years may have had a maturing effect on emerging markets.

Mr Hocknell has just taken the reins of Baillie Gifford's



Rio riches: Brazil is tipped as a promising emerging market

new Emerging Markets Trust. He has run a similar fund in the US for the past two years. The fund has achieved 17.1 per cent growth in sterling terms, beating the best UK emerging markets trust by 4.6 per cent.

Investors who think he can do it again can access the new unit trust with a minimum lump sum of £1,000 or with regular savings from £50 a month. Investors can also put up to £1,500 in the trust as the non-

qualifying (non-European) part of a general PEP.

Mr Hocknell achieved his record by focusing on Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, while avoiding disaster areas like Mexico and Thailand. He also intends to reduce risk by diversifying the fund into 160 stocks in 21 countries. Among his favourite countries this year are Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan.

Given the poor quality of macroeconomic data on emerging markets, he is employing a bottom-up investment style. This means he looks for companies with decent prospects, wherever they might be, rather than investing in sectors whose time, on economic fundamentals, is deemed to have come. With an average market capitalisation of £2 billion, his stocks will not be tiddlers either.

However, investors should beware of the potential pitfalls of the unit trust structure, particularly in a volatile market. As open-ended funds, unit trusts are obliged to redeem investors' money at any time. They can come badly unstuck if stock markets fall for a prolonged period, provoking panic selling by unit holders. Not only does this push down the unit price, it forces fund managers to ditch the good stocks they can sell quickly to satisfy the need for redemptions.

Investors who are foolhardy or brave enough to hang on can be left in a rump fund holding poor and illiquid stocks. Investment trusts, by contrast, have a limited number of shares, can never be forced sellers and can ride out storms more effectively.

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There are 35 emerging markets unit trusts from established groups such as Abtrust, Save & Prosper and Schroders, as well as Baillie Gifford, which already has a Latin America fund in the sector.

But their performances highlight the need for investors to take a long-term view

if they venture into emerging markets.

The downturn in fortunes and the rise in the dollar has decimated the returns of the funds over two and three years — the average performance is actually negative over these periods. Only over five years do they move into profit, but they do so in

style. The top performer, City of London Emerging Market Country, converted £1,000 into £2,675 from 1991 to the end of 1996.

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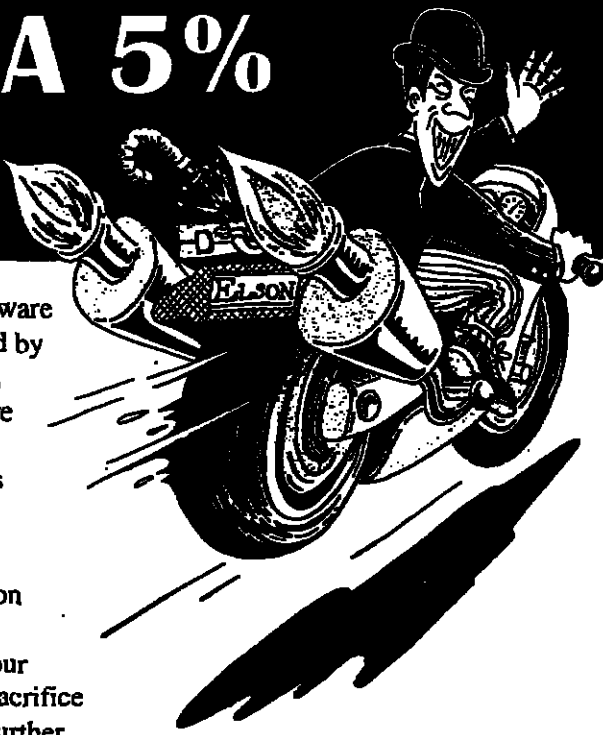
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Page No.	Date	Page No.	Date
1	20/10/2020	2	20/10/2020
3	20/10/2020	4	20/10/2020
5	20/10/2020	6	20/10/2020
7	20/10/2020	8	20/10/2020
9	20/10/2020	10	20/10/2020
11	20/10/2020	12	20/10/2020
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## ATHLETICS

# Kipketer breaks world record in men's 800m heat

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, IN PARIS

WILSON KIPKETER, a Kenyan-born Dane, wasted no time yesterday in becoming the first athlete to profit from the introduction of bonus payments for world records at world championships. He stepped on to the track for a first-round heat at the world indoor championships in the Palais Omnisports here and knocked off a world record in the 800 metres.

For his solo run, Kipketer earned \$50,000 (about £31,000) with the promise of \$50,000 more if he wins the title. Never before in a world championship, indoor or out, has a track athlete set a world record in an individual event in a heat.

Kipketer sliced almost a second off the world record of 1min 44.34sec, held by Paul

Ereng, since 1989. Kipketer recorded 1min 43.96sec, a double blow to Kenya. It might not have been so bad had Ereng, a Kenyan, lost his record to a compatriot, but Kipketer was running for Denmark.

The switch of nationality cost Kipketer a place in the Atlanta Olympic Games last summer. The Danish authorities insisted on him waiting seven years before granting him citizenship. He had lived in Denmark for six years but there was no passport of convenience and he was denied the gold medal that would surely have been his.

In the first international championships since then, Kipketer made an impact on the opening day, but said he had not gone to the start-line

planning a world record. "My group [heat] was not strong and I had no pressure, so I took a chance. It is good to eliminate problems. I take one problem at a time. I have only one thing to think about now — the gold medal, not to break the world record again. If you think about two things, you cannot get two right."

When Jamie Baulch came out for the first round of the 400 metres, the announcer read out his name and lane then, mistakenly, repeated it. "I was laughing," Baulch said. "I thought, 'What's going on?', there are five other people in the race."

Baulch, the overwhelming favourite to win the final tomorrow, qualified, without looking troubled, for the semi-finals today, putting behind him the harrowing experience he suffered on this track three years ago. Having qualified for the European championships final, he crashed to the floor in a tangle of legs approaching the bell, failing to finish.

Admitting that he carried the memory of that moment with him on to the track, Baulch said: "I was thinking to myself, 'Here we go again, it is this track.' He need not have worried. He won his heat in 46.52sec, although he was not first to the bell, as has been customary this season.

Over the next two days he will be left concerned at being first into the second lap because the finish-line, unlike most indoor tracks on which he has run, is at the end of the straight rather than close to the middle. "On this track, coming into the last bend, you can be third or fourth and still do a lot of damage."



Gummel finishes third in her first-round heat of the 400 metres and is eliminated

The Baulch family arrives en masse today from Wales to lend support: mother, father, two aunts, two uncles, girlfriend and baby son. Baulch had said on Thursday that he saw the Americans as the threat and nothing occurred yesterday to change that view. Derek Mills and Deon Minor look the danger men.

Mark Hylton, Britain's second representative, won his heat but was not fortunate that he was not eliminated. On the final bend, Hylton was blocked in and would have had no escape had Kevin

Widmer, from Switzerland, not strayed from the inside, leaving a gap. Hylton ran into it, and into first place, recording 47.58sec.

Baulch and Ashia Hansen were the only two British medal contenders competing yesterday and Hansen cruised through, qualifying as easily as Baulch had. Hansen managed 14.24 metres in the triple jump and now faces, in the final, four of the top seven from the Atlanta Olympics.

Given Britain's revered status as a sprinting nation, it was embarrassing that nei-

ther of the two men's 60-metre runners reached the final. Jason Livingston, in his first championship since returning from a drugs ban, was eliminated in the first round and Jason Gardener went out in the semi-finals. The same applied in the women's 60 metres, no British athlete reaching last night's final.

Sally Gunnell, still making her way back slowly from a series of injuries, went out in the first round of the 400 metres but Phyllis Smith progressed into the semi-finals as a fastest loser.

## SPORT IN BRIEF

## World Cup crown passes to Wiberg

PERNILLA WIBERG, of Sweden, secured the women's World Cup overall skiing title yesterday by finishing third in a super giant-slam at Mammoth Mountain, California, the race being won by her closest challenger, Katja Seizinger, of Germany. Wiberg's third place was worth 60 points and increased her season's total to 1,615 — 11 more than Seizinger, the 1996 overall winner, could accumulate even if she did manage to win all of the five races remaining on this season's schedule.

Wiberg failed, however, to wrap up the season's super-G title. Hilde Gerg, of Germany, ensured that battle would continue in the World Cup finals in Vail, Colorado, next week by taking second place yesterday. Gerg's time of 1min 17.67sec beat Wiberg's by a twentieth of a second and reduced the Swede's lead in the super-G standings to 39 points.

## European charge

GOLF: Colin Montgomerie made a significant move towards his first professional victory on US soil with an impressive performance in the rain-delayed second round of the Doral Open in Miami yesterday. After kicking his heels in the locker-room for an hour, Montgomerie battled through a brisk breeze to reach five under par, within two strokes of the lead. Nick Faldo birdied the first two holes to get to four under while Jesper Parnevik moved into contention with a burst of five birdies in seven holes.

## Whitcombe's target

ATHLETICS: Andrea Whitcombe, the Great Britain international, is taking a break from training for the world cross country championships in Turin later this month to challenge for her third English title at Havant, Hampshire, today. Whitcombe, 25, who previously won the championship in 1990 and 1991, is hoping to take over from the absent Alison Wyeth, who is expecting a baby. There will also be a new men's champion, as last year's winner, John Nuttall, of Preston, is injured.

## Ireland outclassed

HOCKEY: Ireland suffered a humiliating 9-1 defeat against Argentina in the men's World Cup qualifying tournament in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. They kept a clean sheet for the first quarter but lost their composure in a 16-minute spell in the second half during which their opponents rattled in six goals against one in reply from Nick Cooke, who scored from a penalty corner.

## House party

ROWING: Christ Church ended their downward spiral by rowing over on the third day of the Oxford University Torpids on the Isis yesterday. They held off Worcester in the men's first division, which produced only one bump — by Exeter, who caught St Edmund Hall approaching the Gut. Christ Church were, however, bumped out of the women's top division when they were caught by Lincoln.

## BOWLS

## Shaw excels to take seventh title

NORMA SHAW, of Thornaby, won the national indoor singles title for the seventh time — but the first since 1988 — when she defeated Jayne Roylance, of North Walsham, 21-9 in a disappointingly one-sided final at York yesterday (David Rhys Jones writes).

It was a timely win for Shaw, a former world outdoor champion, who was disappointed recently to learn that she had been omitted from the national outdoor side for the Atlantic Rim championships in Llandrindod Wells in August.

Today's success meant as

much to me as the first six," Shaw, 59, said. "I'm still enjoying my bowls as much as I ever did — if I stopped enjoying it, I'd give it up."

After beating Linda Rose, of Copeland, 21-14, Della Searle, of Tilbury, 21-13, and Carol Ashby, of Eastbourne, 21-8, on the way to the final, Shaw found her touch from the start yesterday and, perhaps with that outdoor setback in mind, was at her most determined in the final, never allowing an out-of-touch Roylance to settle to line or length.

Both finalists won the right to compete in the women's

world indoor championships at Llandrindod from April 18 to 20, against players from New Zealand, Hong Kong and Canada, as well as the other three home countries and the Channel Islands.

RESULTS: Singles: First round: D Searle (Tilbury) bt S Rickman (King George Field), 21-12; N Shaw (Thornaby) bt L Rose (Copeland), 21-14; D Ashby (Eastbourne) bt J Searle (Dorchester), 21-14; K Sturt (Ripon) bt E Logan (Marshall), 21-18; N Shaw (Thornaby) bt L Rose (Copeland), 21-14; D Ashby (Eastbourne) bt J Searle (Dorchester), 21-14; K Sturt (Ripon) bt E Logan (Marshall), 21-18; N Shaw (Thornaby) bt L Rose (Copeland), 21-14; D Ashby (Eastbourne) bt J Searle (Dorchester), 21-14; K Sturt (Ripon) bt E Logan (Marshall), 21-18.

## CRICKET

## Pigott's plan makes progress

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TONY PIGOTT, the former Sussex bowler leading a campaign to ouster the county's beleaguered committee, yesterday welcomed the resignation of Alan Caffyn, the chairman, as "a step in the right direction".

Ken Hopkins, 63, a long-serving member of the committee, has been appointed as replacement for Caffyn, whose seven-year reign was finally undermined by the criticism he attracted for blaming the departure of a number of leading players this winter on Alan Wells, the county's former captain, who was dismissed in October.

Pigott has gathered enough support to force a special general meeting on April 8, when a vote will be taken on a motion of no confidence in the

committee. "I can confirm I would like to become chairman," Pigott said. "The future of Sussex is at stake and new blood and new ideas are urgently needed."

"I welcome Mr Caffyn's resignation, but what faces the members now is more of the same or a chance to take the club forward. I feel the whole committee's position is now untenable. There is no way back for them and by appointing Ken Hopkins as chairman they have played into my hands."

"I feel being a committee member for someone's own benefit is not enough. The Sussex committee has not been successful and I am giving members the opportunity to make a positive statement."

Yorkshire's 10,000 members will be balloted at the club's annual meeting in Leeds today on the controversial proposal to move from Headingley to a purpose-built £45 million stadium at Durrkirk, near Wakefield.

The plan ended the backing yesterday of Dickie Bird, the celebrated umpire who played for Yorkshire in the 1950s. "Headingley is the home of legends and steeped in history and tradition, and I have some very happy memories of Headingley as a player and as a Test umpire, but if the new ground comes off, it is an ideal position," he said.

Brendon Julian, the Australia all-rounder, was yesterday confirmed as Surrey's overseas player for the second successive year.

## West Indies slowed by Indian resistance

INDIA yesterday mounted spirited resistance to West Indies' inexorable march towards an intimidating first-innings total in the first Test, but the three wickets they gained in the morning session of the second day barely compensated for the damage done to their cause by Carl Hooper.

The often enigmatic all-rounder progressed from his overnight score of 87 to complete his seventh Test century before spooning a catch to

justified his position of nightwatchman, put on 65 for the fifth wicket as West Indies scored at a reasonable rate on the slow pitch at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica.

Hooper reached his hundred in the first hour by glancing Kumble, but the bowler was rewarded for his relentless toil when Bishop skied a drive to Sunil Joshi, who held a fine catch while running backwards.

Kuruvilla, the 6ft 5in fast-medium bowler who has impressed on his debut with his movement, subtle change of pace and control, kept probing away before he was able to add Hooper's scalp to that of Lara's, which he picked up late on the first day.

He might have had Holder in the penultimate over before the interval, but Mohammed Ashrauddin failed to hold onto a catching appeal and a confident appeal for leg-before was turned down by the umpire, Steve Bucknor.

WEST INDIES: First Innings  
S L Campbell c Mongia b Joshi 40  
S C Williams b Kuruvilla 23  
S Chandrasekhar b Mongia 50  
S Lara c Mongia b Kuruvilla 68  
C L Hooper c Prasad b Kuruvilla 129  
R Bishop c Joshi b Kumble 24  
R C Holder not out 3  
J R Murray lbw b Kumble 15  
Extras (b 7, nb 8) 15  
Total (7 wickets) 370  
G L Ambrose F A Rose and C A Walsh to bat  
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-41, 2-96, 3-143, 4-280, 5-357, 6-368, 7-370  
BOWLING: Prasad 25.5-104-1, Kuruvilla 27-64-3, Kumble 33-3-36-2, Joshi 20-6-68-1, Ganguly 7-1-17-0, Laxman 3-0-14-0  
INDIA: V V S Laxman, N S Sidhu, R S Dharmasiri, S R Tendulkar, M A Azharuddin, S C Ganguly, IN R Mongia, A R Kumble, S Joshi, A Kuruvilla, B K V Prasad, Unspun, S A Bucker (West Indies) and A. M J Kichen (England)

## HOCKEY

## Teddington must pass stern test of character

THE focal point of interest in the National League tomorrow is the premier division match between Cannock, the home side, and Teddington, who must win to keep their hopes alive for the final showdown on April 6 (Sydney Friskin writes).

With the England team away in Pakistan, premier division matches will be suspended until that date except for a rearranged game between Old Loughtonians and Surbiton tomorrow week. Teddington welcome back

their two talented youngsters, Hayden and Wiles, who were training with the England junior squads last week.

Reading, who entertain Guildford, will build their game on the stability of Wyatt in deep defence, the midfield scheming of Hoskin and the sharpness of Pearn and Ashdown in attack.

Havant, already relegated despite a 5-3 victory over Hounslow, are hosts to Barford Tigers, who are battling to avoid a similar fate.

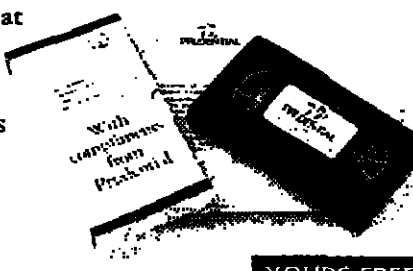
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## RUGBY UNION: BATH AND LEICESTER REST KEY PLAYERS

## Title-chasers keep talent in reserve

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SOME distinguished and expensive players will be warming replacement benches when the Courage Clubs Championship resumes this weekend. Federico Mendez, the Argentine hooker, will watch his colleagues at Bath do battle with London Irish today. Martin Johnson, of England, does likewise for Leicester against West Hartlepool, while Saracens keep two World Cup winners, Michael Lynagh and Tony Daly, on the sidelines against Bristol at Enfield tomorrow.

It is no reflection on the individuals themselves, rather recognition of the workload placed on them already and, more significant, what is to come. Saracens, for example, expect to play nine games between March 30 and May 3 while Newcastle, in the

second division, are preparing for 11 games in eight weeks as they make up their backlog of league fixtures.

The English game's winners and losers will have completed a desperate slog by the end of the season, complicated by yet more postponements this month, caused by the World Cup sevens in Hong Kong. London Irish, with three players away and relegation from the first division looming, will be loath to play their game with Saracens on March 22, though that gives Paddy Johns the chance to recover from concussion suffered while playing in the Saracens second row last Tuesday.

The Irish, second from bottom, take on a Bath side that must win the championship to sustain a nine-year record of success in either league or

cup. They do so with Niall Hogan, the former Ireland scrum half and captain, making his debut against a side whose coaches include Clive Woodward, the former England centre, who worked with the Irish for three years.

"I'm expecting a very difficult game," Woodward said. "Lower sides in the table who are scrapping for points can make life tough." Even so, Bath have beaten the Irish in league and cup this season and, at the Recreation Ground, should complete the treble, though they will look forward to hearing of Simon Ghegan's return. After a season of injury setbacks, the Ireland wing plays in the second-team game at Sunbury.

Woodward, the leaders, give their latest recruit, Kenny Logan, a debut at Loftus Road against Gloucester tomorrow in the knowledge that they have testing encounters to come away from home if they are to sustain their two-point lead over Leicester. Logan, who will win his thirteenth Scotland cap against France next weekend, has agreed a 27-month contract.

It was Gloucester who brought a five-match unbeaten run to an end when Wasps visited Kingsholm in October and started their own remarkable rise up the first division, in which they stand fifth. No one is more representative of their work ethic than Peter Glavin, the flanker, who plays his hundredth game tomorrow. "I hope the national selectors will soon start appreciating him the way we do," Richard Hill, the Gloucester director of rugby, said. "Wasps had hoped that Vaviga Tsiganas would extend his pre-Christmas run with them but, refusing to be drawn into a price war, had to watch while Newcastle bought Tsiganas's contract from Wigan Rugby League Club. The first fruit of that sale will be seen today, when Tsiganas makes his debut against Wakefield alongside another returning union international, Alan Tait.

Llanelli take on Swansea, leaders of the Welsh League, without Iwan Evans, whose place in the Wales team to play England next Saturday was made even more doubtful when a calf strain forced him out of national squad training on Thursday night.

IRELAND SEVENS SQUAD: R Wallace (Saracens), D Hogg (Leicester), N Malone (Leicester), D Humphreys (London Irish), D McBride (London Irish), E O'Brien (London Irish), B O'Brien (London Irish), B O'Brien (London Irish).



The Cambridge University eight on dawn patrol on the River Cam at Ely yesterday as they step up their preparations for the University Boat Race on March 29. Cambridge have won for the past four years

## GOLF

## James striving for place in Ryder Cup picture

MARK JAMES, a Ryder Cup regular for much of the past 20 years, spent £50 on a short Ping putter in Dubai last week and hopes it will help him to get back in contention for a place in the Europe team to meet the United States in the autumn.

He is 86th in the Ryder Cup table, with only 15,832 points, but his five-under-par 67 in the second round of the Moroccan Open in Agadir yesterday left him only one shot behind the leader, David A Russell. James, 43, has lost none of his competitive edge and, though last year was disappointing, he said: "I made my first cut of the season in Dubai last week and my whole game is much better than last year when, frankly, it was bad in all departments."

Yesterday, having switched from his long-handled putter to his new short one, he held a huge putt for an eagle three at the 10th hole and another from more than 20ft for a

birdie two at the short 14th. He came home in 31, five under par, and acknowledged that the first prize of £38,330 this week would be handy in his bid for an eighth Ryder Cup appearance.

James has more than ordinary hope. He won the Moroccan Open on these Royal Golf Links two years ago and is looking for history to repeat itself. But he will have strong opposition. Russell leads on 137, with José Cereces, of Argentina, and the Britons, Phillip Price, Jon Robson and Brian Davis level with James on 138.

In 20 years of trying, Russell has never won on the European Tour. He would have been further ahead but for dropping two strokes at the 18th.

Lee Westwood had a level-par 72 in the second round of the Malaysian Open in Kuala Lumpur yesterday to retain a share of the lead with Larry Barber, of the United States. The pair are eight under par.

## RUGBY LEAGUE

## Cougars ready to pounce on cup holders

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

THE new mood of expectancy at Keighley extends beyond the visit tomorrow of St Helens for a Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-final, now that the cloud of insolvency hanging over the first division club appears to be lifting. It is a sign of the times that all 7,845 tickets for the match were quickly snapped up.

At a meeting this week, creditors were assured by the club's administrator, appointed last October, that a £1 million debt was close to being wiped out. In the Yorkshire town itself, recent despair has given way to buoyancy, as the Cougars put their problems behind them and prepare for the visit of the cup holders.

Kevin Halliday-Brown, the Keighley chief executive, said yesterday: "There was deep pessimism in the town, especially with the moves by a couple of leading players, Nick Pinkney and Martin Wood, to Sheffield. The financial position was a worry for many people, but we are virtually over that and a great cup run and the St Helens match has put a spring back in the step of everyone."

Ironically, some of Keighley's problems can be traced back to the club record fee of £134,000 paid two years ago to Sheffield for Daryl Powell, their players' coach. Three days later, Keighley found there was no place for them in the new Super League. Several sponsors withdrew and club officials reckoned the exclusion cost them in the region of £750,000.

Powell, the former Great Britain stand-off half, stuck by the club and Keighley with him. He was handed the coaching role in succession to Phil Larder, now at Sheffield, whose contract was not renewed after last season. Powell and Simon Irving, the team manager, will both be on duty on the pitch tomorrow. Off the field, the pair have worked well, with a tight budget, in blending a combative, pacy unit that is unbeaten this season.

The one change to the Keighley side, which upset Halifax in the previous round, is the return on the wing of Jason Crichtley, their leading try-scorer last season, who was forced home early from Great Britain's tour of New Zealand last October with a knee injury. Steve Prescott, the St Helens full back, has recovered from food poisoning, but the holders have a doubt about Derek McVey, who faces a late fitness check.

Salford won a tight pre-season contest at Warrington, but that is not a reliable guide to the televised All Super League tie at Widnespool today. David and Paul Hulme, brothers-in-arms for most of their careers at Widnes, are in opposition for the only second time. If it is a case of age before beauty, David, 33, might emerge victorious from Salford's veteran pack.

Steve Blakeley plays his first match since last September at stand-off for Salford after a second groin operation in 15 months. Iestyn Harris, the Wales and Britain back, made his first appearance for Warrington since being placed on the transfer list at £1.35 million last July in the fifth-round defeat of Sheffield, and will be on the bench again.

Leeds, with Richie Blackmore, the New Zealand centre, fit for a first outing, appear to have the most straightforward passage into the semi-finals, playing first division opposition at home tomorrow. Featherstone Rovers were anything but promotion candidates in losing last weekend to Hull Kingston Rovers, but with their side composed of former players at Headingley, incentive is hardly in short supply.

Oldham are expecting a 13,000 crowd at Boundary Park tomorrow, but have the look of sacrificial lambs about them against Bradford Bulls, the finalists last year. Their cause will not be helped by the influential Australian forward, who has a broken hand.

## Rank and file want to see strong leadership

By DAVID HANDS

IF THERE is one quality to emerge from tomorrow's special general meeting called by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, the game at large would wish it to be strong leadership. Sadly, a possible outcome of the third such meeting within 14 months is stalemate, with neither the union nor its opponents receiving the necessary two-thirds majority for proposed constitutional changes.

Quite rightly, the RFU is concerned to turn itself into a business-like structure as possible: democracy, a principle to which individuals turn far too glibly, may have popular appeal but does not necessarily make for day-to-day efficiency. Equally correctly, the rank and file of the game expect to see the best individuals employed to make the revised structure work, but the debate has become bogged down in conflict between personalities, just as the long-running clash between the union and the leading clubs did.

The meeting tomorrow has to vote not only on a series of technical constitutional changes, but on the appointment, powers and relationship of the new chief executive — formerly the RFU secretary, the post held by Tony Hallett — and the chairman of the new 12-man man-

agement board that will succeed the present executive committee, chaired by Cliff Brittle. Whether both can survive in a healthy working relationship in future seems open to question.

The RFU recommends the chairman should be appointed by its own council (the general committee); amendments insist that the full membership should vote annually. Furthermore, a strong body of opinion believes that the post of chief executive should be advertised, which suggests a lack of confidence in Hallett.

"All the characters involved in the present debate have a finite shelf-life," David Hiles, secretary of Pinner and Gramarians, said. "I hope we are setting up principles for the future."

Representatives of Heineken, which has sponsored the European club competition for the past two years, meet European Rugby Club Ltd (ERC) in Dublin on Wednesday to discuss the terms of ERC's television agreement with BSkyB which was confirmed yesterday. They will hope that the five-year deal, said to be worth more than £30 million, incorporates a terrestrial element, otherwise they may have to review their involvement with the competition.

## COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

## FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated  
\* denotes televised match  
Pools coupon numbers in brackets  
FA Cup  
Second Round

(1) Derby v Manchester United  
(2) Leeds v Everton

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(4) Coventry v Leicester

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(6) Sheffield Wednesday v Bolton

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## THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP AND FA CUP THIS WEEKEND

## ARSENAL

Dennis Bergkamp should be able to lead Arsenal through a plainly petrified Forest. The brilliant 17-year-old French prodigy, Nicolas Anelka, could make an early debut in attack, if Paul Merson is unfit. Fed-up with being left out of Paris Saint-Germain's first team, Anelka was delighted to have been brought to Highbury by his compatriot, Arsène Wenger. John Lukic, clearly finding form and confidence, continues in goal in the absence of David Seaman. **BG**

## ASTON VILLA

Brian Little, the manager, is extending his scouting network to Australia — birthplace of Mark Bosnich, the Villa goalkeeper, and original home of sundry other "Socceroos" now plying their trade in Europe. Little has linked up with Roy McLaren, the former Villa assistant manager, who runs a highly successful football academy Down Under. "Anything that can produce talent for us has to be considered," Little said. "It would be foolhardy to ignore what is available over a wider field." **RK**

## BLACKBURN ROVERS

Blackburn are idle in the Premiership because of Middlesbrough's commitments in the FA Cup at Derby. The future, however, is brightening all the time. Tony Parkes, the caretaker-manager, has added youngster Damien Duff to the first-team roster and believes Roy Hodgson will inherit an exciting young squad. "We've got several teenagers on the verge of the first team, and our hard work with the youth policy will soon be paying dividends," he said. **DM**

## CHELSEA

Eddie Newton has had a knee operation and his energy is clearly missed in midfield. Ruud Gullit's fractured ankle will probably keep him out until the end of the season. Reassuring for Chelsea is the impressive form of Grodas in goal, but their defence looks strangely suspect when high balls come into the box. Against first division defenders, Gianfranco Zola might find more space but Gianluca Vialli has been making disappointingly little difference when coming on as substitute. **BG**

## COVENTRY CITY

Gordon Strachan, the manager, reckons he will have snapped up an £800,000 bargain in the shape of Aleksandr Evushok, once the former Dnipro central defender has adjusted to the rigours of life in the Premiership. Perhaps Strachan, still in the Premiership, perhaps Strachan, still in the Premiership, perhaps Strachan, still in the Premiership, should have investigated the Ukrainian's background a bit more closely. Evushok, 27, has spent the past two years studying for a degree at the University of Kiev. His course? Football management. **RK**

## DERBY COUNTY

Derby enter their FA Cup quarter-final against Middlesbrough this afternoon having conceded 16 goals in their past five fixtures, six of them to Middlesbrough in the Premiership on Wednesday. Jim Smith, the manager, is expected to recall Paul McGrath today, while the return to fitness of Chris Powell allows Gary Rowett to move to the back three from left wing-back, where he has been tentative. Dean Sturridge, the leading scorer, is suspended. **RH**

## EVERTON

After throwing away a lead at Southampton in midweek, Everton's need for greater defensive security was revealed in a £4.25 million bid for Slaven Bilic, of West Ham. "I've admired him since he came to this country," Joe Royle, the manager, said. In the meantime, Paul Gerrard's groin injury means that they go to Leeds today with the same defence. Neville Southall continuing in goal. Paul Rideout looks likely to stay, his move to Japan now officially "on the back-burner". **PB**

## LEEDS UNITED

Carlton Palmer may return to the defence this week, and David Wetherall keeps his place in the Leeds line-up. Kelly completes a two-match suspension, and Radebe starts one. Lee Bowyer, who was replaced at half-time by Palmer last Saturday, is fit to return in midfield. The Yeboah saga rolls on, with the forward's agent meeting the Leeds chairman last week. "You'll have to ask the chairman what it was about. I don't know," George Graham, the manager, said. **PB**

## LEICESTER CITY

Steve Claridge seems an unlikely subject for an autobiography but his story is published later this month and it is a footballing tale with a difference. Nothing has been simple. He overcame a heart problem to appear for a succession of non-league and lower-division clubs, working part-time as a gardener and greengrocer. He rowed with managers, gambled heavily and is now involved in a door-to-door egg delivery service. Despite a shoulder problem, he plays against Coventry today. **RH**

## LIVERPOOL

Stan Collymore went Awol last Tuesday, the third time he has missed training without ringing in an excuse. Even Roy Evans is fast approaching the limits of a tether that was seemingly endless and more dramatic action could follow. The manager is impressed with SK Brann's Tore Andre Flo and, should Liverpool beat the Norwegians in the Cup Winners' Cup, he could arrive at Anfield to herald Collymore's hasty cut-price departure before the transfer deadline at the end of the month. **DM**

## MANCHESTER UNITED

Gary Pallister is United's only serious injury doubt, with a groin strain, but Alex Ferguson, the manager, will wait until this morning to decide whether any of the other players need a rest after the emotional high of Wednesday night at Old Trafford. "I might decide to freshen it up with one or two changes," he said. Keane is suspended. If Pallister is not fit, either Johnsen will drop back, or Gary Neville will move into central defence with his brother, Philip, coming in. **PB**

## MIDDLESBROUGH

Mikkel Beck has admitted that he and Fabrizio Ravanelli have not always been on the same wavelength. "I didn't like the way he kept gesticulating at me," the Danish forward said. "It has been difficult but now he understands enough English for me to tell him what I don't like about him." Bryan Robson's men are, however, missing the injured Emerson, Festa, Kinder, Vickers and Pearson, and the manager knows that Internazionale and AS Roma are pursuing Ravanelli. **PB**

## NEWCASTLE UNITED

With all the excitement of European competition and the FA Cup this weekend, Kenny Dalglish's return to Anfield on Monday has been somewhat overlooked. True, he has been back there before, but never as manager of Newcastle. One thing is certain: Dalglish's natural caution will ensure there is no repeat of last season's epic 4-3 result, which denied Kevin Keegan the title and ultimately led to his departure. Dalglish will surely not allow similar fare to be served up. **DM**

## NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Supporters expecting the new owners to make quick signings to try to ease the relegation difficulties have been disappointed. The team that faces Arsenal this afternoon will be chosen from the same squad as three months ago, when Forest beat today's opponents in Stuart Pearce's first game in charge. "We need a striker, a midfielder player and a defender but I have to keep my nerve," Dave Bassett, the general manager, said. At least the £16 million is earning interest. **RH**

## SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

What is it about Wednesday? One defeat in 22 games, and yet still no one is taking them seriously. Take the FA Cup. Chelsea, Wimbledon, even Derby have their passionate backers for the trophy, but not Wednesday. They have managed to sneak into the quarter-finals with barely a murmur, but a home draw, even against Wimbledon, suggests that the 6-1 you could still get last week is a sound bet. With David Pleat, the manager, concocting a mixture of style and bile, Wimbledon are wary. **DM**

## SUNDERLAND

Goals are as rare as smiles on Wearside these days and in the wake of the 4-0 defeat by Tottenham on Tuesday — their worst home reverse in 16 years — Manchester United are unwelcome guests at Roker Park today. Paul Stewart, a boyhood United fan, has announced his return to fitness and should be at least a substitute. With the transfer deadline just two weeks away, the Roker Park faithful are concerned that no relegation-averting signings are in the offing.

## HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal	Last five
1. Manchester United	28	57	+25	WWWOW
2. Liverpool	28	53	+25	WWWDL
3. Arsenal	29	51	+21	DDLWL
4. Newcastle	27	48	+20	DWWWL
5. Aston Villa	29	46	+8	WWWWL
6. Sheffield Wednesday	28	45	+4	DDWWW
7. Wimbledon	27	44	+7	DWDL
8. Chelsea	27	43	+4	WWDL
9. Leicester	27	36	-5	DLWWW
10. Leeds	28	36	-8	DDLWW
11. Tottenham	28	35	-4	LDLWL
12. Everton	28	33	-6	LWLDD
13. Blackburn	27	32	+2	LWDWD
14. Derby	29	32	-13	WDLWL
15. Coventry	29	29	-13	DLLDL
16. Sunderland	28	19	-15	DLLWL
17. Nottingham Forest	28	17	-19	LWLWL
18. Southampton	27	25	-9	LWLWD
19. West Ham	27	25	-13	LLWL
20. Middlesbrough	27	22	-11	WDLWL

1 Middlesbrough deducted three points

## SOUTHAMPTON

After two successive clean sheets, the Southampton defence was back to its bad old ways in the first half against Everton at The Dell on Wednesday. Graeme Souness, the manager, credited half-time substitute Michael Evans, the forward signed from Plymouth Argyle early this week with inspiring the fightback that rescued a point. Frustrating, then, to be without a game today. The club match at Bournemouth last night at least gave Evans another chance to learn the system. **NS**

## TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

Reports last weekend suggested that Chris Armstrong's career could be in jeopardy because of a persistent ankle injury, which has kept him out of the side since early December. Strange, then, that Armstrong is back training with the first team and taking part in knockabout games at the club's Chigwell training ground. It is likely, too, that he will play in part of a reserves match next week. "He's progressing quite nicely," Tony Lenaghan, the Tottenham physiotherapist, said. **RK**

## WEST HAM UNITED

West Ham, who entertain Chelsea on Wednesday, will then be faced with four successive away games if, as is likely, Middlesbrough reach the Coca-Cola Cup final. It is, Harry Redknapp says, the crux of the season, but will the manager have Slaven Bilic to help him through it? Everton have confirmed their interest — a £5 million bid seems imminent — but Redknapp is adamant. "We don't want to sell, it's as simple as that," he said yesterday, "and he must show some loyalty to us." **KP**

Reports: Brian Glenville, Peter Ball, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Nick Szczepanik, Keith Pike, David Maddock. Statistics: Julian Desborough

## WIMBLEDON

Not a bad week for Wimbledon. Robbie Earle has been voted Carling player of the month for February, the first Wimbledon player to receive the honour. Leonhardsen is doubtful, but Sullivan, the goalkeeper, and Jones are expected to be fit for the FA Cup game at Hillsborough tomorrow. Paul Heald, Sullivan's understudy, impressed in the draw at Coventry, which was described by Joe Kinnear, the manager, as "a terrific result considering we had half the team only half-fit." **NS**

## ARSENAL v NOTTINGHAM FOREST

TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 0-2, 1-3, 3-0, 1-1, 3-3, 1-1, -1, 0, 1-1

## HOW THEY LINE UP

ARSENAL (from): J. Lukic, L. Dixon, N. Winterburn, A. Adams, P. Vieira, S. Hughes, D. Bergkamp, M. Keown, S. Marshall, D. Platt, P. Merson, S. Morrow, L. Harper, P. Shaw, I. Selley, M. Rose, N. Anelka.  
NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Crossley, D. Lytle, S. Pearce, C. Cooper, S. Chettle, J. Jerlan, A. Hazzard, S. Gerrard, I. Woon, D. Saunders, N. Clough, B. Roy, S. Howe, S. Blatherwick, C. Armstrong, P. McGregor, S. Gunn, D. Phillips, A. Pettis.

## COVENTRY CITY v LEICESTER CITY

TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-0, -1, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0

## HOW THEY LINE UP

COVENTRY CITY (from): S. Ogrzewiec, R. Shaw, G. Green, D. Dublin, P. Williams, P. Teller, R. Richardson, G. McAlister, E. Jess, N. Whelan, D. Hudderty, P. Nollan, B. Barrows, A. Evushok, M. Hall, G. Strachan, J. Folan.  
LEICESTER CITY (from): K. Keller, S. Grayson, S. Prior, S. Guppy, J. Lawrence, S. Walsh, J. Watts, M. Lopez, S. Taylor, N. Larnon, G. Parker, S. Cludge, M. Robins, S. Campbell, S. Wilson, K. Poole.

## LEEDS UNITED v EVERTON

TICKETS: Seats available  
10-YEAR RECORD: -1, -1, 0-0, 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 1-0, 2-2

## HOW THEY LINE UP

LEEDS UNITED (from): N. Martyn, G. Hall, D. Wetherall, R. Molemar, I. Rush, C. Palmer, L. Bowyer, L. Sharpe, I. Harle, B. Doane, A. Yeboah, R. Wallace, A. Dango, A. Gray, M. Ford, M. Jackson, M. Beoney.  
EVERTON (from): N. Southall, P. Gerrard, E. Barrett, D. Unsworth, Z. Phelan, D. Watson, C. Short, A. Grant, J. Parkinson, D. Ferguson, G. Speed, G. Stuart, M. Branch, P. Rideout, M. Holtger, J. Spore, C. Thomson, N. Bamby.

## SUNDERLAND v MANCHESTER UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: -1, -1, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0

## HOW THEY LINE UP

SUNDERLAND (from): I. Perez, G. Hall, D. Kubacki, R. Ord, A. Molyneux, D. Kelly, A. Rae, K. Ball, M. Gray, P. Bracewell, C. Russell, J. Mullin, L. Howey, D. Preece, P. Stewart, S. Agnew, M. Bridges, D. Williams.  
MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P. Schmeichel, G. Neville, D. May, G. Pallister, D. Irwin, D. Beckham, R. Johnsen, E. Cantona, R. Giggs, A. Cole, O. G. Solskjaer, B. McClair, K. Robson, P. Neville, R. van der Gouw, J. Cruyff.

## TODAY'S FA CUP SIXTH ROUND

## DERBY COUNTY v MIDDLESBROUGH

TICKETS: Sold out  
CUP RECORD (home team): P.5, W.2, D.1, L.2, F.6, A.10.

## HOW THEY LINE UP

DERBY COUNTY (from): R. Hout, G. Rowett, P. McGrath, I. Shrac, L. Carlsley, R. van der Laan, D. Powell, C. Dally, A. Asanovic, P. Trolope, R. Williams, A. Ward, M. Taylor, P. Simpson, S. Flynn.  
MIDDLESBROUGH (from): B. Roberts, N. Cox, C. Fleming, R. Mustoe, M. Beck, J. Juninho, F. Ravanelli, C. Hignett, A. Moore, C. Blackmore, P. Stamp, G. Walsh.

## TOMORROW'S FA CUP SIXTH ROUND

## CHESTERFIELD v WREXHAM

TICKETS: Sold out  
CUP RECORD (home team): P.3, W.1, D.0, L.2, F.6, A.7

## HOW THEY LINE UP

CHESTERFIELD (from): B. Mercer, J. Hewitt, M. Jules, C. Perkins, M. Williams, C. Beaumont, S. Gaughan, J. Howard, I. Dunn, G. Lund, S. Dyche, P. Holland, A. Morris, A. Mitchell, J. Lomas.  
WREXHAM (from): A. Marriott, M. Cartwright, M. McGregor, D. Brace, A. Humes, B. Jones, B. Carey, P. Hardy, M. Chalk, C. Skinner, P. Ward, B. Hughes, K. Russell, G. Owen, D. Brammer, W. Phillips, S. Walton, K. Connolly, G. Bennett, S. Morris.

## PORTSMOUTH v CHELSEA

TICKETS: Sold out  
CUP RECORD (home team): P.2, W.1, D.1, L.0, F.2, A.1

## HOW THEY LINE UP

PORTSMOUTH (from): A. Knight, R. Patrick, R. Perrett, A. Thomson, A. Axford, P. Hall, S. Igoe, F. Simpson, D. Hillier, M. Swenson, L. Bradbury, A. McLaughlin, A. Cook, A. Dobson.  
CHELSEA (from): F. Grodas, D. Petracou, F. Leboeuf, S. Clarke, F. Sinclair, S. Minto, R. Di Matteo, C. Burley, G. Vialli, E. Johnsen, D. Wise, P. Hughes, A. Myers, J. Morris, M. Nicholls, G. Zola, M. Hughes, N. Colgan.

## MONDAY

## LIVERPOOL v NEWCASTLE UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out  
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-0, 4-0, 1-2, -1, -1, -1, 0-2, 2-0, 4-3

## HOW THEY LINE UP

LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, D. Matteo, R. Jones, S. I. Borneby, J. McRae, N. Ruddock, P. Bab, J. Barnes, S. McManaman, M. Thomas, J. Redknapp, S. Collymore, R. Fowler, S. Harkness, J. Carragher, M. Kennedy, A. Warner, L. Jones, P. Berger, B. T. Kwame.  
NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): S. Hiskop, P. Smick, W. Barton, J. Bowford, D. Eddy, D. Pearce, R. Lee, P. Boardley, L. Ferdinand, F. Asprilla, R. Elliott, D. Garcia, K. Gillespie, S. Watson, L. Clark, P. Alvert, J. Crawford.

10.50pm BBC1 Match of the Day (highlights, includes Derby County v Middlesbrough)

11am Sky Sports 1 Goals on Sunday  
1pm Sky Sports 1 Portsmouth v Chelsea (live)  
4pm BBC1 Sheffield Wednesday v Wimbledon (live)

7pm Sky Sports 1 Liverpool v Newcastle United (live)

20: A Shearer (Newcastle United), 18: I Wright (Arsenal), 14: D Yorke (Aston Villa), 13: R Fowler (Liverpool), F Ravanelli (Middlesbrough), L Ferdinand (Newcastle United), 12: O G Solskjaer (Manchester United), M Le Tissier (Southampton), 10: C Sutton (Blackburn Rovers), S Collymore (Liverpool), E Ekoku (Wimbledon), 9: D Dublin (Coventry City), S Claridge (Leicester City).

1-4: Manchester United; 9-2: Liverpool; 10-1: Newcastle United; 16-1: Arsenal; 50-1: Aston Villa; Chelsea; 80-1: Wimbledon; Sheffield Wednesday. Odds supplied by Ladbrokes

The official Internet site of the FA Cup and Premiership is at <http://www.facup.com/>

English Cup 1520



## FOOTBALL

# Portsmouth's run of success built on shaky ground

ROB HUGHES



Weekend View

What bitter-sweet games football plays with our emotions. On Wednesday, flying as high as it gets, we had the sublime exhibition from Manchester United in the European Cup. By Thursday, we were taken to the depths again by the Crown Prosecution Service's confirmation that the match-fixing trial, sully the essence and integrity of the sport, is to go on for months, perhaps years to come.

We are lifted, we are crushed. Yet the weekend comes and with it the FA Cup. The great traditions that have gone on since before any of us were born are revisited on Sunday at Fratton Park, where Portsmouth, Cup winners in 1939, take on Chelsea, the team that would bless the Cup Final this year with all the grace and skills that you could imagine.

Portsmouth could beat Chelsea, no doubt about that. Chelsea are so gifted that they can outwit Manchester United, Liverpool any team in the land, and Chelsea are so proud of their talents that an honest team such as Portsmouth could take them in half a game.

Intriguing, and the city is that Fratton Park, on its last legs, is reduced to 15,500 capacity — less than a third of the 51,385 who cheered Portsmouth to the echo against Derby County in the sixth round of this competition just after the Second World War.

At Portsmouth you can feel the gravity of the game's history; you can sense a club fallen on hard times, grappling for a home, for a place in the future and yet, with ruthless intent, aiming to put an end to the fresh dream of Gianfranco Zola and his imported pals.

Who is plotting Chelsea's downfall? Why, Terry Venables. He is using Portsmouth, the club he has purchased for one pound, to resuscitate both the compulsion that he can own and run a leading football club and the belief that Portsmouth can survive this season and survive the drastic decline that, in the modern financial age, will one day destroy the structure of League football as we have known it in England.

Venables is not the manager at Portsmouth, indeed Terry Fenwick, the former England and Tottenham Hotspur defender, is. "As far as I am concerned, Terry Venables is the best coach in the world," he said.

And Fenwick celebrated his award as the first division's manager of the month yesterday by dipping his toe into some mild controversy. "The fact that isn't the England manager is the biggest ricket the FA has dropped since the 1966 World Cup finals. Terry did a great job with England last summer and spent two years assembling a great squad of players. He lifted the whole nation with what he achieved at Euro 96 — and then left. It seems crazy. With all due respect to Glenn Hoddle, he is not in Terry's league. England's loss is Portsmouth's gain."

Of course, it changed the history not only of Portsmouth but of Chelsea. For Hoddle, having directed the London club halfway towards its present standing, handed over to Ruud Gullit and the Dutch.

man, in his first season, has broadened the visions, the ambitions and the allure of Chelsea in a manner not seen for two decades.

All of that will not be lost on Portsmouth. They have aspirations of their own. Alan Knight, the goalkeeper who came south from Bournemouth at 10 and dropped anchor at Portsmouth, plays his 738th game for Pompey. An England youth and Under-21 international, a player dropped at the start of this season, a single-club loyalist, Knight thinks back to 1992 when Portsmouth lost an FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool.

"After the defeat on penalties, I looked around the dressing-room," he said. Darren Anderton and Kit Symons were really upset at missing out on the final. I thought, at least they will get another crack at success in their careers; I had missed my last chance... but now it's come again."

The only other players in that Portsmouth side who face Chelsea tomorrow are the sweeper, Andy Awford, and Alan McLoughlin, the Ireland international whose goal against Nottingham Forest put Portsmouth into that semi-final.

Their new team-mates include Lee Bradbury, the striker bought out of the Army for £400 so that he can travel to Portsmouth by car from Cones, and Russell Perrett, a defender who was fitting double-glazing a year and a half ago.

These read like tales of non-League football and, unless Portsmouth achieve further success in the Cup or promotion to the Premiership, they could be common stories at whatever ground Portsmouth find if they leave Fratton Park.

Purchased for under £5,000 nearly a century ago, the future of the ground is now in doubt. It all makes Venables's £1 gamble seem not only remote but also whimsical. And still they could beat Chelsea.

## JUNINHO THE FACE OF FOOTBALL

By David Maddock

In the charmingly named village of Inglesby, between Middlesbrough and Darlington, lives the player who wears the most famous football jersey in the world. For the past three seasons, Oswaldo Girodo Junior, or Juninho, has worn the No 10 shirt of Brazil, acquiring himself honourably in the jersey made legend by Pelé. He sports the same number for Middlesbrough, a shirt made famous by Alan Fargg and John Hickson.

There is the money, enough even to make a struggle at the foot of the FA Carling Premiership seem attractive, but sitting in the comfortable if anonymous house that the club bought for him, Juninho conveys too much honesty, too much fresh-faced warmth, to be painted merely as another mercenary. Ravanelli and Emerson may not care unduly for Middlesbrough, but Juninho clearly does.

"The image of some foreigners in England has not been portrayed well and it hasn't helped, but I can honestly say that I have never had a problem with living here," he said. "Of course, in the beginning it was difficult, but I brought my family here, my mother, father and sister, and it is much easier for me. The people here have always been kind to me and that has made me happy."

Sitting in his mock-Victorian living room, with the mock coal fire burning gently, it is clear that Juninho has settled into an English culture that he describes as "very different" from home. It is clear, too, that he is content. Yet the question remains. Why Middlesbrough? If England, why not Manchester United or Liverpool, Newcastle United or Chelsea?



Juninho believes that struggling Middlesbrough are too good to go down

Juninho is diplomatic and cautious, perhaps because of the much publicised outbursts from his less sensitive team-mates. He says that he has no problems with the comments attributed to Ravanelli, Middlesbrough's Italian forward, about the club and his team-mates, but insisted: "I'm here because I believe in Middlesbrough, and I believe in Bryan Robson."

It is easy to win big honours with teams like Milan or Manchester United, but to do it with Middlesbrough is a far bigger challenge. I still think we can meet that challenge."

Juninho arrived from São Paulo in November 1995 for £4.75 million. With mesmeric skills and a vision that English players invariably lack, his reputation was enhanced by a wonderful display for his country against England the previous summer. Two seasons on, he is too frequently a peripheral figure as the club sits at the foot of the Premiership. Yet Juninho's

argument carries weight, because in the next five days he will play two games that could transform a bitterly frustrating season into a highly successful one.

Today, against Derby County at the Baseball Ground, Middlesbrough contest a place in the semi-finals of the FA Cup. On Wednesday, they take a 2-0 lead into the second leg of a Coca-Cola Cup semi-final with Stockport County.

He would like to stay with Middlesbrough, that much is clear, but more than anything he wants to wear that Brazil No 10 shirt in the

World Cup finals next year. To do so, he knows he must be playing in a successful team, and that is where the FA Cup comes in.

"I travelled to Brazil last week to play for my country," he said, "and the coach, Zagallo, ribbed me about Middlesbrough's position. He said it was a joke, but in fact he meant it as a very serious point."

"Of course he's concerned, and so am I. It would be very difficult for me to play in the first division and for Brazil. I explained to him that we are a very good team, and we are doing very well in the cups. When I came to Europe it was important to do well in the league, but also to play in European competitions. If we win one of the cups, and I think we will, then I will be fulfilling that ambition and Zagallo will be happy."

Juninho argues passionately that things are finally beginning to take shape at the Riverside Stadium. "With so many foreign players, so many different languages, it was hard at the start of the season," he said. "Now we are beginning to play well, and we can escape relegation. We are too good to be in this position."

The FA Cup, he said, is "almost an obsession in England, and I like that. I like the passion there is here for the football and I enjoy the style of play. We have to go to Derby after beating them well just a few days ago, but I know it will be a very different game this time. But even though we are in a more comfortable situation in the Coca-Cola Cup, I think we can win them both."

His optimism is refreshing, especially for those Middlesbrough supporters who have despaired of the criticism that their club has been forced to endure, both from outsiders and the very footballers that they were hoping would improve their image.

"I am a fan, I will support this club even when I leave," Juninho said. He would dearly like to continue playing in Europe, but does not know yet if it will be in England because, as Brazil's No 10, he is not without ambition. To Juninho, that ambition does not exclude more humble demands.

## Albania forced to play away by Fifa

By Russell Kempson

FIFA, football's world governing body, has ordered Albania to play their next two home matches in the World Cup qualifying series in Granada, Spain.

The fixtures against Ukraine on March 29 and Germany on April 4 were due to have been played in Tirana, the Albanian capital, but the decision to switch them was taken because of the political unrest in the Balkan country.

The Spanish football federation offered Granada's Los Cármenes stadium, which has a capacity of 15,400. However, it has not yet been decided whether Albania will have to use the same venue when they play Northern Ireland in group nine on September 10.

Castrol UK is to end its six-year sponsorship agreement with Swindon Town, the Nationwide League first division club, at the end of this season. The oil firm will continue to support the club in a more minor financial role.

Martin Stevens, the Swindon marketing manager, said: "All good things come to an end and both of us feel we have developed the partnership as far as it can go."

Terry Venables, the Australia coach, has agreed to free Mark Schwarzer, the Middlesbrough goalkeeper, from international duty to play for his club in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final second leg against Stockport County at the Riverside Stadium on Wednesday.

Schwarzer was due to join the Australia squad for a match against Macedonia on the same night.

"Mark is keen to establish himself as our No 1 goalkeeper," said Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager, said. "With a Wembley place at stake, it is an important game for the club. Australia have eight games from now until July, and this is the only clash." Middlesbrough lead 2-0 from the first leg.

Gareth Farrelly, 21, the Aston Villa midfielder, has rejected a new 3½-year contract. The Ireland international, whose present contract expires in the summer, is frustrated by his lack of first-team opportunities.

Martin Bodenham, 47, of East Loos, Cornwall, who is one of England's most experienced officials, has been chosen to referee the Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley on Sunday, April 6.

## Hughes earns interest on advance

Russell Kempson on a forward-thinking youngster charging his cup to Wembley

Bryan Hughes. The mere name, not to mention his goalscoring skills from the Wrexham midfield, produced a glint in the eyes of Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, and Mick McCarthy, his Ireland counterpart. There must be a trace of Welsh or Irish ancestry — a Dafydd or Seamus Hughes turning among the grandpapas — surely? Gould and McCarthy made discreet inquiries.

Their search proved fruitless. Hughes is pure Anglo-Saxon — born in Liverpool, only five minutes from Goodison Park, with not a trace of a Celtic bloodline. "I'm English through and through," he said, in a rich Scouse accent. "And I'd love to play for England one day — of course, I would."

Hughes, 20, has already taken the first tentative steps on the road to international recognition. He was one of only two second division players selected for the Nationwide League Under-21 squad that drew 1-1 with Serie B under-21s in Genoa last month. Calm and confident, consistently creative, he did not look out of place amid the young bucks from Torino, Palermo and Reggina.

His education takes another unexpected curve tomorrow, when Wrexham play Chesterfield in the unlikely of FA

Cup quarter-finals. If he is excited, he keeps it well hidden: the prospect of a place in the last four produces no more than a tinge of anticipation. Little fizzes him.

"I remember listening to the draw on the radio, driving along in the car, and I was a bit disappointed when we came out with Chesterfield," he said. "I was hoping for one of the bigger clubs, a Premiership club. Something to test ourselves against."

"Then I thought: 'Hang on. It means a second division side is going to reach the semi-finals. That's got to be good for the league. One of us is going to be one game away from playing at Wembley. You can dream, can't you? It's phenomenal.'"

Hughes's only visit to Wembley was 18 months ago, when he was 16. He and his school were beaten 3-1 by Liverpool in the FA Cup Final. It was not a fun day out for the Evertonian family. "I was a bit young, I don't remember too much about it," Hughes said. "I



FA CUP

don't think we were very happy, though."

Four years later Liverpool spotted him playing for Archbishop Beak School in Walton and asked him to attend their centre of excellence. It also ended in tears. "Nothing came of it," Hughes said. "They had a 30-strong squad and I just didn't feel part of it. I felt like an outsider. After a few months, I got fed up and left."

Liverpool's loss later became Wrexham's gain, via the



Hughes: Wrexham's gain

## FOR THE RECORD

## BASKETBALL

SWISSER LEAGUE: Leopards 83 Worthington 73.  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Charlotte 122 Boston 121 (OT); Washington 99 Miami 85; Atlanta 117 Philadelphia 104; New Jersey 102 Vancouver 96; Orlando 94 LA Clippers 93.

## BIATHLON

NOZAWA OHSER, Japan: World Cup: Men (20km): 1. Kitzbühel (Austria) 21.56; 2. H. V. Heston (Fin) 21.58; 3. S. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 4. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 5. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 6. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 7. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 8. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 9. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59; 10. J. O. Rønnevik (Nor) 21.59.

## BILLIARDS

NORTH: Strahan world matchplay champion. Fourth round: England (1) 4-2 N. P. (2) 4-2 R. C. (3) 4-2 R. C. (4) 4-2 R. C. (5) 4-2 R. C. (6) 4-2 R. C. (7) 4-2 R. C. (8) 4-2 R. C. (9) 4-2 R. C. (10) 4-2 R. C. (11) 4-2 R. C. (12) 4-2 R. C. (13) 4-2 R. C. (14) 4-2 R. C. (15) 4-2 R. C. (16) 4-2 R. C. (17) 4-2 R. C. (18) 4-2 R. C. (19) 4-2 R. C. (20) 4-2 R. C. (21) 4-2 R. C. (22) 4-2 R. C. (23) 4-2 R. C. (24) 4-2 R. C. (25) 4-2 R. C. (26) 4-2 R. C. (27) 4-2 R. C. (28) 4-2 R. C. (29) 4-2 R. C. (30) 4-2 R. C. (31) 4-2 R. C. (32) 4-2 R. C. (33) 4-2 R. C. (34) 4-2 R. C. (35) 4-2 R. C. (36) 4-2 R. C. (37) 4-2 R. C. (38) 4-2 R. C. (39) 4-2 R. C. (40) 4-2 R. C. (41) 4-2 R. C. (42) 4-2 R. C. (43) 4-2 R. C. (44) 4-2 R. C. (45) 4-2 R. C. (46) 4-2 R. C. (47) 4-2 R. C. (48) 4-2 R. C. (49) 4-2 R. C. (50) 4-2 R. C. (51) 4-2 R. C. (52) 4-2 R. C. (53) 4-2 R. C. (54) 4-2 R. C. (55) 4-2 R. C. (56) 4-2 R. C. (57) 4-2 R. C. (58) 4-2 R. C. (59) 4-2 R. C. (60) 4-2 R. C. (61) 4-2 R. C. (62) 4-2 R. C. (63) 4-2 R. C. 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RACING 42

Cheltenham Man gets into mood for Festival

# SPORT

SATURDAY MARCH 8 1997

ATHLETICS 44

British hopes take early tumble at world championships

Champion trails as German drivers dominate practice for Australian Grand Prix

## Hill has to watch the world go by

FROM OLIVER HOLT  
IN MELBOURNE

DAMON HILL has seen the writing on the wall every day since the end of last season and yesterday, as the impossibility of defending his hard-won world championship was rammed home, he saw pictures on a giant screen, too. Images of the best car in Formula One stared down at him from above Albert Park and gave him the closest view he is likely to get all season of a Williams-Renault.

Hill, a giant No 1 emblazoned on his T-shirt and on the front of his Arrows-Yamaha, had to survive a gearbox failure and a spin as he struggled his way to the thirteenth quickest time in the opening two practice sessions for the Australian Grand Prix tomorrow, sandwiched between the Prost-Mugen-Honda of Olivier Panis and the Tyrrell Ford of Mika Salo.

The most enduring memory of the day was of his car being driven slowly to the pits on the back of a breakdown truck. When it arrived at the Arrows



Hill sees a long, hard road ahead as he prepares to embark on the defence of his drivers' title in Melbourne. He was thirteenth in practice yesterday, 2½ seconds behind Schumacher, who was fastest

TELEVISION

QUALIFYING: ITV: Today, 10-2.40pm  
RACE: ITV: Tomorrow, 2.10-5.10pm  
Free, repeated 2.0-4.00pm Highlights  
11.00pm-12.10am

garage, it was winched slowly down to the floor, a mechanic sitting astride its nose, a sad symbol of Hill's fall from the Formula One summit.

His car seat, lost in transit in Singapore, had not turned up either, so he had to use a temporary one. "If anyone sees it," he said afterwards with a smile, "will they let me know?"

Ahead of him — more than 2½ seconds a lap ahead of him — in fact Michael Schumacher, who has been the soul of pessimism about his own title chances this season, put Hill's fall into sobering perspective when he fended off the challenges of the Williams drivers, Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Jacques Villeneuve, to finish at the top of the times in his Ferrari.

Later in the afternoon, though, in the heat of the Ferrari garage, Jean Todt, the Ferrari sporting director, said that although he was encouraged by Schumacher's performance, although it proved the new car was not "a disaster", as some had thought, he still expected Williams to be the team to beat in the race tomorrow. "They look very, very strong," he said.

With Hill out of the championship equation, the new

order in Formula One took on a decidedly Germanic feel, with the Schumacher brothers, Michael and Ralf, and Frentzen in the top five places. Eddie Irvine, Michael Schumacher's Ferrari team-mate, was the leading Briton, in sixth position.

Deciphering practice times, when different drivers run unknown fuel loads and experiment with different set-ups, is as problematic as cracking a complex code, but there was no disguising the Williams comfort and their potential to improve. Their performance prompted Hill, as honest and reflective as ever, to allow his thoughts to wander off in search of things past.

"I seemed to be out on my own on the circuit for long periods of both sessions," Hill said, "so I fantasised I was at the front again. I saw a picture of a Williams on the big screen

and I thought it was me. But it wasn't. It seemed strange for a moment.

"Despite the problems we had, I think the day was a success. I am very pleased to be only 2½ seconds off the pace and, if we can keep the same margin in qualifying, that would be a good result for us. There is still a hell of a lot to do, though, so there is no point in getting carried away. "Whatever happens this season, I will see it through.

There is no question about that. I do not walk away from the responsibilities that have been placed on me. It might have been difficult for Nigel Mansell to cope with not running at the front, but he had been racing a lot longer than me and I still have plenty of enthusiasm. I am ready for a tough year.

"Credibility is given for different reasons in Formula One. The next stage for me in proving I am a great driver is

to show I can do it in a car other than a Williams. At Arrows, I can do it by getting a better performance from the car than the experts consider possible."

Schumacher insisted after the afternoon session that setting the quickest time was a "meaningless prize", but he admitted that the car, the final Ferrari creation of the designer, John Barnard, who has been replaced by Rory Byrne, performed better than he had expected.

He has maintained throughout the winter that Ferrari would not be truly competitive until later in the season, so the preliminary indications yesterday suggest that there may be a closer fight between him and the Williams drivers than he has so far cared to predict.

Frentzen, whose fastest lap was 0.4sec slower than Schumacher's, revelled in his

elevated position, but returned Todt's compliment by saying how "very, very competitive" Ferrari were going to be. Villeneuve, the championship favourite, gave every sign that he had not been wringing all he could have done from his Williams. "The last lap time was going to be pretty quick before I got held up by traffic," Villeneuve said, "but I don't know how quick. Most of the work we did today was just comparing two types of tyres.

but in general we were pretty quick and I have to say that I am confident."

If Hill's lowly position had been widely predicted, the biggest disappointment of the day was the performance of McLaren-Mercedes. Mika Hakkinen set the tone for their day early in the morning session when he failed to see Irvine's Ferrari and collided to a separate suspension problem. Hakkinen finished the

day in tenth position, two places below his team-mate, David Coulthard. "We are a long way from the performance we achieved in testing," Ron Dennis, the McLaren managing director, said.

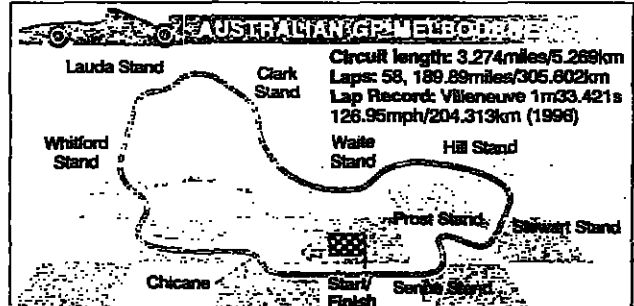
Further down the grid, the first outing of the new Stewart-Fords was also something of an anticlimax after such a feast of expectation and publicity. Inevitable first-day glitches limited the running of their drivers, Jan Magnussen and Rubens Barrichello, to a combined total of 20 laps and left them in eighteenth and 21st place respectively.

The debut of the Lola team, though, offered far less hope for the future. Their drivers, Vincenzo Sospiri and Ricardo Rosset, finished so far adrift of the leading times that it is unlikely they will make it onto the starting grid if the margin remains the same in qualifying today.

MELBOURNE PRACTICE TIMES

1. M. Schumacher (Ger, Ferrari) 1min 32.496sec; 2. H-H. Frentzen (Ger, Williams-Renault) 1:32.910; 3. J. Alonso (Fr, Benetton-Renault) 1:32.956; 4. J. Villeneuve (Can, Williams-Renault) 1:33.371; 5. R. Schumacher (Ger, Jordan-Peugeot) 1:33.437; 6. E. Irvine (GB, Ferrari) 1:34.157; 7. G. Berger (Austria, Benetton-Renault) 1:34.271; 8. D. Coulthard (GB, McLaren-Mercedes) 1:34.432; 9. J. Herbert (GB, Sauber) 1:34.593; 10. M. Hakkinen (Fin, McLaren-Mercedes) 1:34.742; 11. G. Fisichella (It, Jordan-Peugeot) 1:34.777; 12. O. Panis

(Fr, Prost-Mugen Honda) 1:34.927; 13. D. Hill (GB, Arrows-Yamaha) 1:35.073; 14. M. Salo (Fin, Tyrrell-Ford) 1:36.142; 15. N. Larini (It, Sauber) 1:36.223; 16. J. Trulli (It, Minardi-Hart) 1:36.392; 17. J. Verstappen (Hol, Tyrrell-Ford) 1:36.716; 18. J. Magnussen (Den, Stewart-Ford) 1:37.003; 19. P. Diniz (Br, Arrows-Yamaha) 1:38.092; 20. S. Nakano (Japan, Prost-Mugen Honda) 1:38.652; 21. R. Barrichello (Br, Stewart-Ford) 1:40.002; 22. U. Kuylenstierna (Japan, Minardi-Hart) 1:40.947; 23. R. Rosset (Br, Lola-Ford) 1:41.168; 24. V. Sospiri (It, Lola-Ford) 1:42.590.



### Chesterfield charged over mass brawl

CHESTERFIELD'S preparations for their FA Cup quarter-final against Wrexham tomorrow were upset yesterday when, along with Plymouth Argyle, they were charged by the Football Association in connection with a mass brawl in the Nationwide League second division match between the two sides at Saltergate 14 days ago (Richard Hobson writes).

Four players were sent off — Kevin Davies and Darren Carr, of Chesterfield, and Richard Logan and Tony James, of Plymouth — after the fracas. Ronnie Mauge, of Plymouth, had been dismissed earlier.

Meanwhile, the FA fined Crystal Palace and Norwich £40,000 each, £30,000 of which was suspended until 1998, for their parts in an incident involving 21 players

during their first division match last December.

However, in the case of Chesterfield and Plymouth, the fighting was more prolonged. With that in mind, the disciplinary committee may take sterner action.

Both Chesterfield and Plymouth have been given 14 days to respond to the charge and the likelihood is that both will ask for a personal hearing. John Duncan, the Chesterfield manager, was distraught after the incident because he knew immediately that Davies and Carr would be suspended for the cup-tie tomorrow, described in the town as the biggest game in the club's 131-year history.

"Before the incident, the Wrexham tie was balanced at 50-50; the loss of the two lads does not help us," Duncan said.

### Taylor's recall comes at a trance

BY RICHARD HOBSON  
AND PETER BALL

EVERY year the FA Cup generates human interest stories in abundance but few can match the return to action of Martin Taylor, the Derby County goalkeeper, in the quarter-final tie against Middlesbrough at the Baseball Ground this afternoon. After 29 months of worry, pain and toil, he makes his first appearance for the club since a double fracture of his left leg placed his career in jeopardy.

Jim Smith, the Derby manager, decided to recall Taylor after Russell Hoult conceded six goals in the FA Carling Premiership defeat by Middlesbrough three days ago. Asked whether Taylor's selection represented a gamble, Smith replied: "It would have been more of a gamble to stick with Russell."

Taylor, 30, was injured in a

challenge with Dave Regis in a first division game against Southend United in October 1994. The leg healed slowly and a pin inserted during a second operation remains in place. Although hours in the gymnasium helped him to recover physical fitness, Taylor was lacking confidence before he visited Clive Wilson, Fearon, a sports psychologist and hypnotist.

"Goalkeepers do things instinctively and my problem was that I was thinking what action to take," Taylor said. "By the time I had decided, it was too late. The hypnosis was a stepping-stone on the long way back and it helps me to do things naturally again."

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager, does not anticipate a repeat of Wednesday's scoreline. "This will be a totally different game," he said. "It was tough for an hour before we ran



away with it." He is also more concerned about the club's plight at the foot of the Premiership.

"If we beat Derby, I won't be celebrating," he said. "The first thing I'll do is look at the league results."

Roud Gullit, the player-manager of Chelsea, who play Portsmouth at Fratton Park, is still coming to terms with the English fascination for the Cup. "When I played in Italy, you wanted to win the league, because then you would qualify for the European Cup and play against all the best teams. That was always your goal.

"Here, you seem to like the

Cup. I found it strange at first, but now I think I realise what it means, why it is so important to you. I can accept that."

Sheffield Wednesday and Wimbledon, the most improved sides in the Premiership, meet at Hillsborough tomorrow. If anything, David Platt's success in turning around Wednesday is even more remarkable than Joe Kinnear's transformation of Wimbledon. He inherited little more than a declining team of crowd-pleasers. "Last year, the job was more difficult than most," Platt said. "Some of the problems just hadn't been dealt with."

Wrexham play Chesterfield at Saltergate, in the all-second division tussle, with injury doubts about Karl Connolly and Kevin Russell, their strikers.

Premiership guide, page 46  
Juninho at home, page 47

### Cape Town makes the Olympic running

CAPE Town yesterday overtook Rome, in the opinion of many, as emotional favourite to stage the Olympic Games of 2004 (David Miller writes). A panel of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) named a shortlist of five candidates: Athens, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Rome and Stockholm.

The regulations required a minimum of four from 11 bidding cities. So competitive was the standard, in the 20,000-word report of an evaluation commission, that a fifth was included. Eliminated were Istanbul, Lille, Rio de Janeiro, San Juan, Seville and St Petersburg. "We nearly ran out of time in the final debate, it was so heated," a member of the commission said.

Rome (1960) and Stockholm (1912) have previously staged the Games. Rome, with a

billion-dollar expenditure programme for the Christian millennium, has widespread sports-orientated construction under way, but Cape Town's appeal as the first African host will prove hard to resist when the vote goes to the IOC membership on September 5.

Many argue, including critics in South Africa, that the newly-liberated country has more urgent priorities. The bid, however, has the emphatic approval of President Nelson Mandela and promises to create 90,000 jobs if accepted.

Athens, historic first host of the modern Games in 1896 and controversially bypassed for the centenary Games last year, staged by Atlanta, may find itself again sidelined in a two-headed contest between Rome and Cape Town. Buenos Aires would be South America's first Games host.

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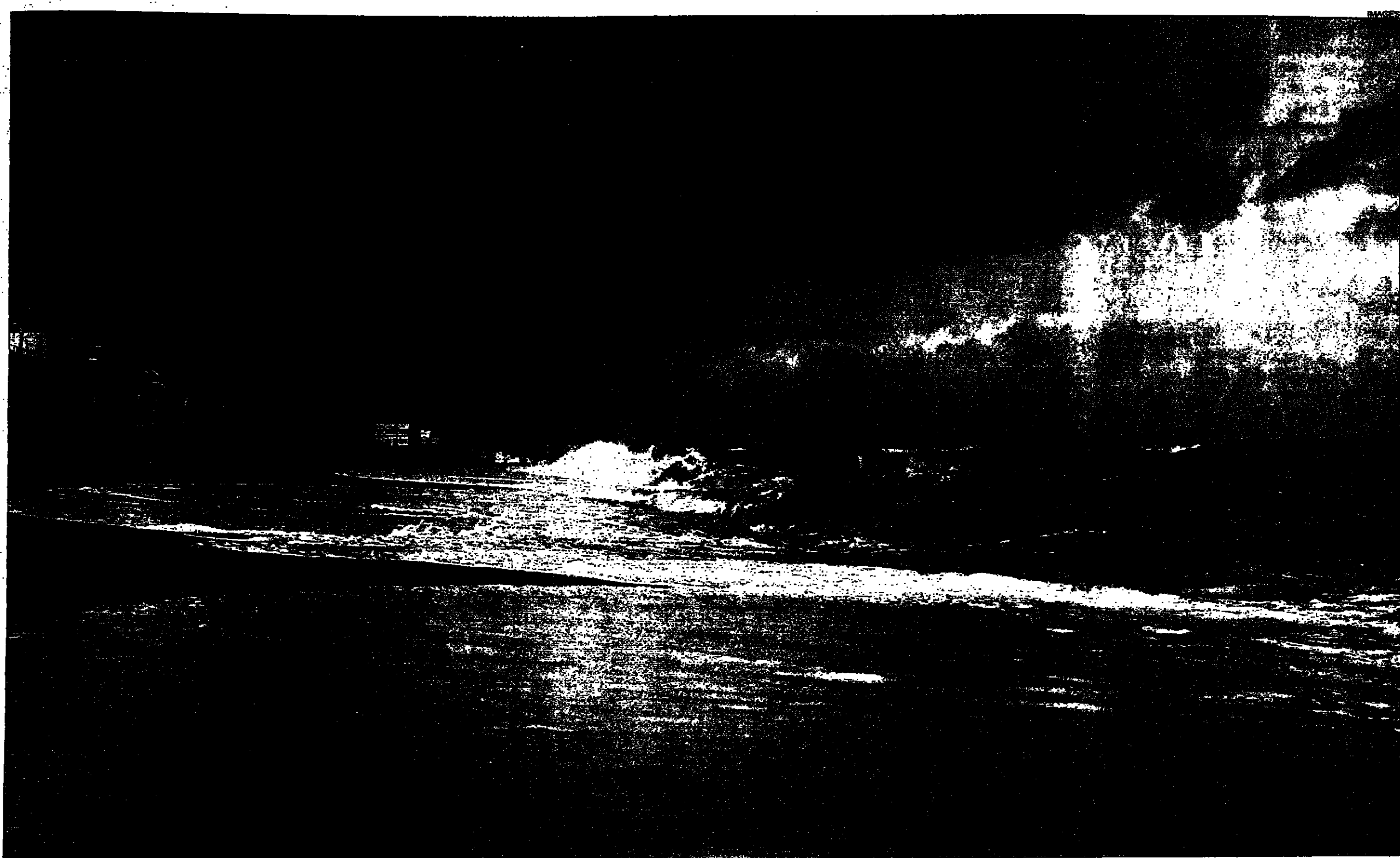
The moles  
convert  
Paul  
Heiney  
country life - 13

THE TIMES

# weekend

Diana's  
Caribbean  
island  
hideaways  
travel - 15

SATURDAY MARCH 8 1997



Suffolk coast - 11.97

This all begins with a soft explosion over some smoked salmon. As we drink to the soon-to-be-departing year, my property-developer friend has just sensed from me the possibility (only the possibility) that *The Times* (his *Times*) might back Labour in the election. The temperature on the beach outside our window is well below zero. The hail is scooping in from the sea. Warnings of more ice in the night have already reduced our New Year's dinner party to three. This news about *The Times* is yet another unwelcome forecast.

We quickly get back to Aldeburgh-talk of music, fish and lifeboats. We have only the most desultory discussion about why so many Conservatives want to give Tony Blair a chance. My friend thinks that they (and now he includes me) are all mad. As the storm-blown hail and shingle threaten to flatten the house, I raise the usual questionmarks against Tory competence, unity, corruption, leadership and fatigue — and try to sound as sane as I can.

Chelmsford, Essex - 3.1.97

Time-for-a-change will be a mantra in the coming election season. What does it mean? I am not a regular recorder of political conversations. Many years ago, as a *Sunday Times* reporter, I had a much-loved black book in which I wrote down what politicians told me; these days a comment from a reader, a friend, a political contact or a chance encounter is either an immediate topic for

*The Times* or it dies. New Year resolution: for the next few months I will try to ask questions about change and record some answers.

A few friends still live here in Chelmsford where I was born. For most of them, I discover, the answer to my question is very simple. Their change has already happened. Some four years ago, around about the "Black Wednesday" humiliation of John Major's main economic and foreign policy, but not just because of it, they decided that the Prime Minister should lose his job. Among Tories in London I am always told that on polling day voters will not remember the ERM: "The letters themselves are already history, like NEDC and TSR2... they mean nothing." Maybe. Here it is not so much that people remember the ERM and the uncontrolled incompetencies around it; it is just that it was then, at that specific faraway time, that they addressed themselves to politics; and that then, after making their decision, they went back, like sensible folk, to dinner, golf and commuting.

Colchester, Essex - 4.1.97

Brian is a 35-year-old marketing manager for a small electronics company. (I will not give his name or any names in this diary: no one, neither the rulers nor the ruled, spoke to

me on what we call "an attributable basis".) Brian is a new *Times* reader and says that he is going to vote Labour for the first time. Why? He talks of Conservative tax increases and sleaze before coming to what I think is his main point: "I've got a choice. I've never had a real choice before. Throughout my life I've been able to choose cars, supermarkets and holidays — but never politics. I could never have voted for Kinnock. But Blair is fine."

I ask if that is not a bit flip: after all, perhaps it is because of the Tories that he has had all those choices. He looks amazed.

Politicians, though schooled to expect no gratitude from voters, always want it. John Major intends "to run on my record". Meeting Britain's many Brians will not raise his spirits.

Primrose Hill, London - 6.1.97

Back home in London I find a reader's letter. My former

*Sunday Times* boss, Hugo Young, has claimed to hear from us the "throat-clearing of rats making prudent preparation for their destiny". If *The Times* were to back Blair at this election, would that be a fair charge?

How should I answer? *The Times* judiciously endorsed John Major against Neil Kinnock in 1992. We enthusiastically supported Margaret Thatcher in all her election victories, except in the first when the paper was muzzled by a long trade union dispute. Before that *The Times* had settled around the line where Conservatives and Liberals met, flirting frequently with centre parties and coalitions, but supporting the Conservatives on polling days.

Are we a Tory paper? Some may think so — and not only on the Suffolk seashore. But a sense of the national interest (however inadequately sensed) has traditionally predominated over party interest at *The Times*. Editors with conserva-

tive values have long sought to be close to governing politicians and the governed people: but in the best days we have always listened to the latter the more closely.

Might we decide to abandon "a sinking ship"? My more impatient Tory friends often charge that our criticisms over the past four years have helped to push the party down. If we were ever in John Major's crew (and we were never fully signed up) we left our posts in 1992. If we formally abandon the Tories at this election it will not be because they are under water but because they have so often seemed dead in the water, barely moving, little led, unresponsive to the public instinct, not really a Conservative government at all.

Bloomsbury, London - 14.1.97

David is a history graduate who wants a job in journalism. As is prudent for those seeking career advice from *The Times*, he says that he is a *Times* reader. He would very much

like to be living at a time of powerful political change "like in 1945 or 1979". But he is not sure that this is it. "Blair and Major are so much the same. I have never seen the two of them in the flesh in the same room. Have you? Is it all a trick?" He smiles like a small professor.

"For a tide of change you need big new ideas, like the Welfare State or Thatcherism. We don't have that, nothing like it." He pauses to scabble for a piece of paper. "I voted for this government but now I hate them — and they all seem to hate each other. That's some sort of change, I suppose."

On the paper is written a mass of hostile quotes from *Times* leaders about John Major. I take my suspicions back. He is a *Times* reader. But when I ask him which party he thinks we will support at the general election, he does not hesitate for a moment. "Oh, Conservatives," he says.

Oxford - 17.1.97

The "hate" that David sees is all too apparent everywhere. Foolishly, I somehow still associate voting with roustabout and enjoyment. This season ought to impress us with ourselves. It ought to make us feel good. One of the questions when I was a student of Greek history here was why Athens, of all the many moderately civilised places in the 6th

century, Mediterranean, became the birthplace of democracy. One of the answers was that only Athens had the drunken festival of the Dionysia in which the rules and hierarchies of ordinary life were regularly turned upside down. From that beginning came "bread and circuses", "Eatanswill" and other good election times. Now the parties are something else entirely.

Knightsbridge - 22.1.97

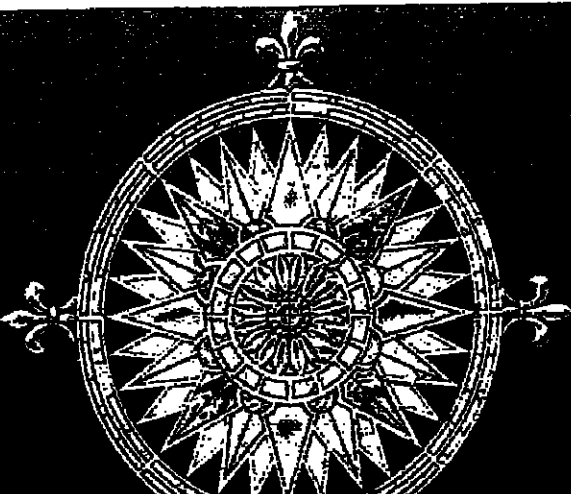
Robert is a Somerset businessman and long-time Liberal supporter. He admires John Major as the man who "killed off socialism" in 1992. "Thatcher had done most of the heavy-lifting but if Major hadn't beaten Kinnock, then socialism would have been still alive. We all owe him a lot for that."

"But what Major didn't realise was that the country was only just beginning to change in 1992; he thought that it had stopped. Major offered Thatcherism with a friendly face; Blair offered strong leadership, strong rhetoric and moral conservatism with an even friendlier face. Blair has always seemed to be going somewhere. Labour will unlock some of the energy that we are wasting in this country."

Beside us on the stairs a phalanx of fellow businessmen is going up to a breakfast given by the Shandwick public relations company. I follow on. We are all going to listen to the Prime Minister rallying the company's corporate clients. Robert, it turns out, is taking

Continued on page 2

SHOPPING	23	GARDENING	45	PROPERTY	78	FEATURES	10	HOME LIFE	11	COUNTRY LIFE	13, 14	TRAVEL	15-23	GAMES	25
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## BIRDS OF PREY

Out now in hardback from WH Smith and booksellers everywhere

I heard Dr Jonathan Sacks, the chief rabbi, on the radio on Monday, talking to Melvyn and Tariq and the rest of the gang about the need to rediscover traditional morality. Dr Sacks said that, in some quarters, modern life had been reduced to "working and shopping". His tone left the listener in no doubt that he thought this was a poor state of affairs. Shopping, he did not need to add in that company, was an axiomatically corrosive activity, both cause and effect of the dangerously wobbly condition of the moral order, about which Dr Sacks is so concerned.

Having just been asked to take on this column, I was taken aback by Dr Sacks's view. I had assumed this to be a pretty innocuous little slot, tucked up cozily in the blameless Weekend section — yet

now a learned and much-respected man was citing the popularity of my new subject as an example of all that was wrong with the world. Ridiculous as it may seem, I feel compelled to write my first offering as a defence of the business of going into a shop.

The exchange of money for goods or services is often held up for headshaking and chinstroking. Shopping is denounced as a sterile, uncreative and soulless way to spend time — a modern evil. I believe it to be none of these things — as I shall irrefutably demonstrate in the coming weeks.

For now, I suggest two thoughts: one is that those doing the denouncing usually have wives who do much of their shopping for them. The other is that the strength of their denunciations

depends on what is being shopped for. For instance, I bet that Dr Sacks — I don't know this for sure but feel it uncontroversial to assert — enjoys going to bookshops. I predict that he does not have a mental picture of Waterstones or Dillons when he comes on the radio and condemns shopping. I predict too that Dr Sacks does not condemn the shopper who, right now, may well be reading the jacket of *The Politics of Hope* by Dr Jonathan Sacks, deciding whether to part with £15.99 for the pleasure of owning it.

I further predict that Dr Sacks owns more books than he will ever read — most educated, no, every



ROBERT CRAMPTON

educated person I have ever met certainly does. If Jonathan Sacks, or Melvyn Bragg or Tariq Ali can take me into their hallowed studies and not be able to point to at least

## SERIOUS SHOPPING THE GOOD BUY

one volume that has remained uncracked since the day they bought it — because they liked the look of it, or they decided that they should know more about such-and-such and then realised that they couldn't be bothered, or because they just fancied spending some money — then the binding on my argument falls apart. But I don't think they can do that, and my argument remains intact.

So I think that, if Dr Sacks were to look deep into his soul, he could not deny that he has at some time bought a book — and who knows what else? — purely for the thrill of parting with money in order to possess it. He must admit that he

has derived pleasure from the shopping act. Who would blame him? Beautiful: tempting things, books — as are many things you find in shops. The prospect of enhancing our lives with a little beauty is reason enough for most of us to go shopping, over and above the need to pick up a pint of semi-skimmed on the way home.

So there is the search for beauty, and there is the search for self-improvement too. I glance at my own bookshelves. I see, at random, *Landscapes and Memory* by Simon Schama. I see *The End of History* by Francis Fukuyama. I see *Preparing for the 21st Century* by Paul Kennedy, all unread, all bought for a mixture of motives — because I liked the look of them,

because I wanted to keep up, because buying these books said something about the sort of person I wanted to be. Much the same motives, I am sure, as drive other people who buy too many shoes or clothes or cosmetics or any of the other things of which Dr Sacks probably does not approve. They were mistakes, those shopping trips, but honourable ones.

As I said, this is my first shopping column. I apologise for trundling such a heavy trolley over you the reader, and indeed over the estimable Jonathan Sacks, whose book I really must buy, and, what's more, read. A man must examine his conscience. I have done so, and I find it to be clear. Next week, nifty gritty: I visit the hardware shop and attempt to buy half a dozen masonry nails.

# The best seats in the house



The latest barstools mix industrial chic with comfort and safety, says Sudi Pigott



ABOVE: Philippe Starck stool in fennel, orange or lavender plastic, £49.50, Conran Shop (0171-589 7401)

MAIN PICTURE (left to right): Stax silver-finished metal slatted stool, £75, Heal's (0171-636 1666). Lyra bar stool in natural beech and chrome, £206, Heal's, as before. Aluminium nail stool with soft or hardwood base, from £195, Stephen Einhorn (0171-359 4977). Limited edition Mercury bar stool in aluminium with a seat design based on an antique tractor, £600, Philip Watts, Three Designers (0171-633 9494). Pom Pom stool made from Tibetan lamb's wool, £200, Precious McBane (by appointment only: 0171-403 5270). Tall aluminium Luna bar stool, £230, Allermuir (01254 682421)

Thanks to Café Coast, 28 Lavender Hill, SW11. Photographs: Des Jensen. Styling: Caroline Griffiths

Continued from page 1  
his briefcase and copy of *The Times* somewhere else. A pity. Compared to the complaints about the press and the opinion polls which I hear at the breakfast-table (laced with some unbreakfastlike discussion of Delhi-belly following the PM's visit to India) the analysis of my Somerset acquaintance seems rather pow-

erful. The Prime Minister says that he is looking forward to getting back on his soap box. He expresses enormous faith in the power of Michael Heseltine (or "Hezzy", as he calls him, placing a "y" where headline-writers prefer an "a"). He impresses upon his fellow breakfasters the power of the economic recovery to change voters' minds.

### Pall Mall: 23.1.97

How does John Major deal with an opponent who has moved himself so certainly and so forcefully on to Tory territory and still seems to have so much momentum behind him? The questioner is a worried Conservative from Gloucestershire. His potential respondents — in London's clubland are all rather quiet. What sort of Prime Minister would Tony Blair be? Would he give way to the Left at the first battle or would he keep to the path that he has held in Opposition? An answer finally comes from a very senior Conservative for whom "Tony Blair is a man who won't... let... Britain... down". Every one of these words falls singly with a thud and repeats like whispered thunder.

### Primrose Hill: 25.1.97

I am back at dinner with my property-developing friends. This time the place and the weather allow a larger gathering which includes a recently selected Conservative candidate. No Suffolk hail or flying pebbles could match the fury of this soon-to-be-MP at even the chance that *The Times* may back Tony Blair. "Why do you have to wait? Why not endorse us now? New Labour is a con-trick: its momentum is a bit of magic: I don't believe you could ever fall for it."

I try to explain why New Labour might be able to make new welfare reforms, why the party which created the welfare state might be the party that has the public consent to cut it back. The Conservatives' embrace of Labour's postwar settlement was the key to their re-election in 1951. Has not Labour now done the reverse, embraced Thatcher's reforms and promised to move them on? I cannot remember her replies — only the fine food and the spattering of her incredulity.

### St James's: 28.1.97

*The Times Literary Supplement* cites a quotation from the philosopher Elie Kedourie: Conservative discourse is the one "which hugs most closely the shape of this world". Or, as Dr Johnson put it, "I live in the world and I take, in some degree, the colour of the world as it moves along".

At the birthday party of a formidable Tory fixer a politics-watcher argues to me that the sense of the country is "for

change much farther and faster than you or I or any of these people [he waves his arms around the club] would have expected". He does not want to blame John Major. He prefers impersonal forces. "This sense has been around for a long time," he says. "Since the '92 election?" I suggest, echoing Robert's words in the Knightsbridge hotel. "No, longer, since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Without an external threat the Left is free to climb into our garden. It has happened in America, too. We don't believe any more in big cuts in tax and spending; so it is just a matter of who will best run the national shop at its current size. The fundamental ingredient of the change to the left is not ideology but movement itself. It may be dangerous. But none of us has dealt with it."

We pause for a glass of water: there is a lot of abstemiousness and not much celebration here. "John Major has made a vacuum and called it Conservatism. It is not enough to rely on defending Westminster from the Scots and Belgians — particularly when Westminster includes Neil Hamilton and Brussels is like an occupying

power already. Tony Blair has sensed that vacuum, occupied the space and given it his own name and his own hopes."

### Pall Mall: 7.2.97

"It's going well, isn't it?" says one of the numerous (probably too numerous) Tory strategists who are readying themselves to run the campaign and lunching with editors along the way. "Before Christmas the Prime Minister was a bit worried about whether he was going to win but now he's absolutely certain he will win." With each brightly coloured plate of food (from golden ginger to glowing beetroot coulis) in his even more brightly coloured club restaurant he sets out a different set of achievements. "Unless you can show me why and where you disagree with any of our

policies you must surely support us in *The Times* on polling day."

I try to explain that, as far as I can see, the Tory campaign is not going well at all. "Yes, *The Times* does support many of the Government's policies but, if there was ever an administration that was less than the sum of its parts, it is this one."

He does not sense any sort of change except a rather "thoughtless fatigue" with the Government. "A true political tide" requires massive problems (like uncontrollable inflation or unemployment), credible solutions (normally with an -ism at the end) and committed leadership (Antlee, Bevan, Thatcher).

I see this point. But these three conditions are not always visible at the time of voting. Sometimes you can

only feel them and sometimes not even that. "You mean policy is one thing and politics quite another?" he snorts.

Another well-known Tory supporter is waiting for a taxi on the street outside. "I know people want change," he says, "but they can change anything they like these days. It's a bloody Marks & Spencer society. Why do they want to change governments too?"

### Grosvenor House Hotel: 10.2.97

"The Conservative Winter Ball is secondary only to the Party Conference", according to its chairman, Shirley Bassey is here. So are some big spenders who pay £170,000 for a signed book by Norma Major and £14,000 for Lord Archer's auctioneer's hammer. A senior Cabinet minister greets me rather acutely and inquires if the occasion is not "a bit puritan" for me: so someone has got the message. A politician whom I have never had a meal with in 15 years of writing about him says that "we must have lunch": he speaks in a light muffled tone as though from the inside of a refrigerator. This does not suggest sincerity. A senior QC

looks embarrassed, most sincerely embarrassed, to be seen here at all.

### Shepherd's Bush Empire: 11.2.97

There is 80 minutes to wait before the American singer Suzanne Vega comes on stage. I talk for a while to a quiet man who is alone except for a *Evening Standard*. He works for BT and claims to be "a bit of a Conservative". He thinks that Tony Blair will "get in, do a few things I like and quite a few things I don't like". Will you vote for him? "Oh yes," he says. When did you decide? "About three years ago." What about John Major? He looks at me as though I were an empty beer cup. When Suzanne Vega comes on, she rather surprisingly makes a joke about Shirley Bassey. My *Evening Standard* man laughs and whispers. "I thought she was dead."

### Eastbourne, Sussex: 23.97

The sea here is free of hail. The weather is warm. The crocuses are flowering around the bright new fences in the park, where the council has stopped the children biking over the grass. There are two women sitting underneath a new sculpture: it is made of retired wooden breakwaters from the beach and entitled *Eighteen Thousand Tides*.

Over the past eight weeks I have grown used to approaching *Times* readers and asking them questions that usually editors do not ask. One of the women is actually sitting on *The Times*, the two-day-old edition carrying the Wirral by-election catastrophe for the Tories. I hope (I am ever hopeful) that she has read it first.

She has always been a Labour voter. She had expected that John Major would have done more "for the poor, for the schools and the young people out of work". But she would not have voted for him even if he had.

What about her friends? Were any of them Conservatives?

Yes. "But Tony Blair is going to win, isn't he? If we don't have Labour in this time, when are we ever going to have them?"

She leans against the bleached white posts. "There are times for things and their time has gone."

In Eastbourne, a woman was sitting on a copy of *The Times*.  
"If we don't have Labour in this time, when are we ever going to have them?" she asks



Eighteen Thousand Tides at Eastbourne: made from reclaimed wooden breakwaters

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Blue belles will be out in force this spring as denim is given a stylish edge, says Heath Brown



**ABOVE:** Denim drop-waist dress, £22, Elam, 484 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-494 7732). Cream and blue stripe vest, £25, Martin Kidman, 309 Brompton Road, SW3 (0171-823 7310)

**LEFT:** Khaki stretch shirt, £26.99, Jeffrey Rogers (0171-208 4300). Denim button-through skirt, £45, French Connection, branches nationwide (0171-580 2507). Brown leather gold buckle belt, £32, Martin Kidman, as before. Denim shoulder bag, £10, Elam, as before. Brown leather wedges, £75, Bertie, 36 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-935 2002)

**RIGHT:** Indigo denim-look linen belted jacket, £70; bootleg jeans, £35, Warehouse branches nationwide. Denim cork wedges, £24.99, Ravel, branches nationwide (0171-631 0224)

Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hansford. Styling by Amandip Uppal. Denim two-seater sofa from Next Interiors, £449 (mail order 0345 100500)

# Mood INDIGO

**W**earing denim doesn't have to mean donning an old pair of blue jeans or a faded Levi's jacket anymore. Smarter cuts and pretty looks are giving it a new edge.

The washed-out, double-stitched traditional styles are now being discarded and replaced by deep indigo denim of almost industrial-strength stiffness. The fabric is getting a make-over and is being used for expensive tailoring and couture-style dresses. Chanel recently included signature designs made from denim and last season saw Alexander McQueen and John Galiano using it patched and pleated on wide trousers and sharp jackets.

The whole feel of this fabric makes it a perfect antidote to over-the-top frilly flounces and so the two mix well. A complete denim outfit, also works and there is a wide selection of trouser suits around. Bootleg cut trousers in this stiff fabric keep their shape

and look smart with a short-sleeved fitted shirt. If you go for more traditionally cut five-pocket jeans they must be indigo and have a turn-up of at least three inches to be really trendy.

The name in jeans at the moment is Evisu, with basic baggy cuts selling at more than £100. Surprisingly, even at this price their arrival in Britain last year saw them completely sold out to the label-conscious crowd.

Maintenance of this stiffer denim is important and a full wash and spin is not advisable. It is best to have them dry-cleaned to retain their deep colouring and keep the fabric well-groomed.

Accessory designers are also using denim: for shoes, bags and hats. In fact it is everywhere this season and getting the blues has never been so much fun.

**RIGHT:** Denim jacket, £94, Martin Kidman, as before. Denim hat, £42, Dollargrand (0171-794 3028)



## THREE OF A KIND

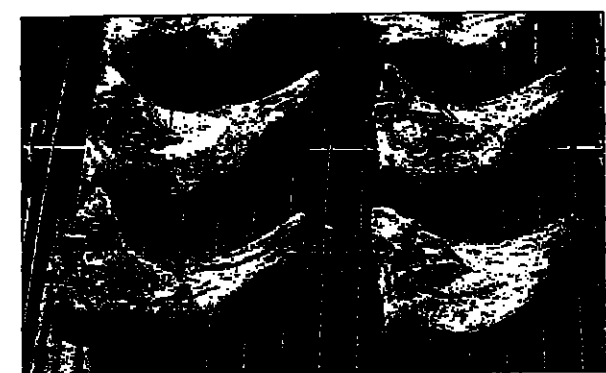
The floaty feminine look around at the moment is too overbearing for some, so the answer is to wear a printed chiffon scarf that will add femininity without taking over. Here are our favourites. H.B.



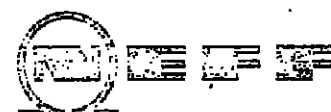
**TOP:** Orange two-tone floral print chiffon scarf, £78, Gordana at Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-708 2538)  
**MIDDLE:** Black and red swirl print scarf, £8.99, Next, 54-58 Kensington High Street, W8 (0116-284 9424)  
**BOTTOM:** Pure silk chiffon large polka dot scarf, £52, Fiona Pitkin, A La Mode, Hans Crescent, SW1 (0171-221 8841)

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# Fabergé touch for your beds

Auricula's ravishing flowers are luring more enthusiasts, says Barbara Abbs

I see nothing in it but what is innocent and it... serves as a gracious relaxation for gentlemen of the study and the office," wrote a French enthusiast during the reign of Louis XIV about the growing of auriculas. And, judging by their increasing popularity, it is as true today.

Auriculas are highly bred members of the primula family and have umbels of flowers in ravishing colours, with contrasting centres and, frequently, white-dusted foliage. They were developed from a hybrid of *Primula auricula* and *P. hirsuta*, which grow in the Alps.

The 16th-century Dutch gardening buff Clusius grew auriculas in Leiden, where they were known as *Auricula ursi* or "little bears' ears" because of their fleshy, pointed leaves. They found their way to northern France and Flanders and then to England. By the 18th century they were established here.

The attraction of auriculas is that exciting hybrids can be created, the plants are small, they need no heat in winter and vigorous ones soon produce "offsets" that can be swapped or given away.

For Adrian Orchard, growing auriculas is the perfect relaxation. A notary public, who commutes from the village of Southeast in East Sussex to London, his working day is long and a spell outdoors each evening with his collection of plants relaxes him. His first glimpse of auriculas was on Geoffrey Smith's television programme *World of Flowers* some years ago, and it was love at first sight.

Today, in a cool part of his garden facing east, is a row of raised cold frames lined with a thick layer of gravel. Rows of "long tons" (tall clay pots particularly suitable for plants with a long, thick root) contain a wide range of

## FACT FILE

■ The National Collection of Edged Auriculas will be shown at the Chelsea Flower Show, starting May 19, by Brenda Hyatt, of 1 Toddington Crescent, Bluebell Hill, Chatham, Kent ME5 9QT (01634 86325), and other rare varieties by Cravens Nurseries, 1 Foulds Terrace, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4LZ (01274 561412).

■ Shows in the southern section of the National Auricula and Primula Society will be held at Datchet village hall, near Windsor, Berkshire, on Saturday, April 5 and Saturday, April 26.

● Information: Adrian Orchard on 0171-208 2901, or Lawrence Wigley, 67 Warham Court Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey SM5 3ND.

auriculas. Among them is a plant of the oldest surviving variety, the deep plum 'Argus' from 1869, and varieties of his own. There is also one with narrow cream stripes on black, named 'Southeast'.

With micropropagation, good auriculas are now more widely available. Before this, unusual specimens were passed among fellow "florists" and the best forms rarely found their way into commerce. The elaborate composites described in early books — barrowloads of goose dung soaked in buckets of bullock's blood and mixed with sugar-bakers' scum — have made auricula growing seem as esoteric as alchemy. Some enthusiasts still sieve manure and

mix it with two-year-old leafmould, but many others simply use a loam-based compost with added grit and peat. Mr Orchard mixes two parts John Innes No 2 with half a part of grit and half a measure of peat.

Auriculas are divided into several groups: show auriculas, alpine and doubles. All classes have subdivisions, particularly show auriculas. In the 1740s cultivars with leaf-like green tissue instead of petals were produced. Where this edging is dusted with the farina or white meal that makes auriculas so distinctive, it appears grey. Where the farina is thick, the edge looks white. The finest flowers have a dense circle of farina, or paste, in the centre and a ground colour —

black is highly thought of — that feathers out into the white, grey or green edge. They are as if made from a precious stone by Fabergé.

Only border auriculas should be grown out of doors in flower beds. They need moist but well-drained soil and a cool position. Buy plants from a specialist nursery or a show. Seeds from specialist suppliers are also available. Commercial seeds, often labelled as "Alpine auriculas", can be disappointing, producing variable flowers.

There are fashions in auriculas as in much else. Double flowers are popular again and resemble small carnations or old roses in shades of cream, gold, amber, plum or violet. Striped flowers fell from favour

in the 18th century, but one enthusiast of these, Allan Hawkes, a past president of the National Auricula and Primula Society, who lives in Rabley Heath, Hertfordshire, has been recreating them for 20 years with considerable success.

The auricula year begins in February when the plants "wake up". The beauty of many of the varieties is in the delicate white meal on leaves and flowers, and water can spoil it.

Pots should be watered individually using a can with a narrow spout. Water heavily in spring during the flowering period and lightly in summer. Mr Orchard uses a quarter-strength mix of

tomato fertiliser during the growing period to ensure fine flowers.

After flowering, plants need repotting. Opinions differ as to the relative merits of clay or plastic pots, layers of crocks at the bottom of the pot or the best time to repot. Even long term pots are not considered essential by every expert. In fact, auriculas tolerate a wide range of cultivation methods. Repotting times from May onwards are suggested, while August is a favourite in the south.

When repotting, compost is gently removed from the roots, which are then washed and examined for disease or pests and replanted in fresh compost. Small shoots or offsets are removed and potted

separately to make additional plants. There is a burst of growth in early autumn and then the plants begin to die down, though they do not disappear.

The only things auriculas do not tolerate are waterlogging, drying out or over-heating. Alpine primulas are covered with snow all winter and can put their roots down further and further into cool crevices during summer. They cannot do this in pots.

With the right site for border auriculas or shady cold frames for show and alpine types, plus a little time to attend to their needs, more and more people are finding they can grow auriculas satisfactorily without recourse to alchemy.



Border auriculas grown by Adrian Orchard, of Southeast, East Sussex, who breeds his own varieties as a means of relaxation



Thriving *Primula auricula*

## WEEKEND TIPS

- Prune *Buddleia davidii* hard back to a framework of older wood, even though this means losing some early shoots.
- Cut down newly planted raspberry canes to 9in. Apply potash to established canes.
- Stand flowered pots of narcissi or hyacinths in a light, cool place such as a cold frame to die down, or plant out in the garden.

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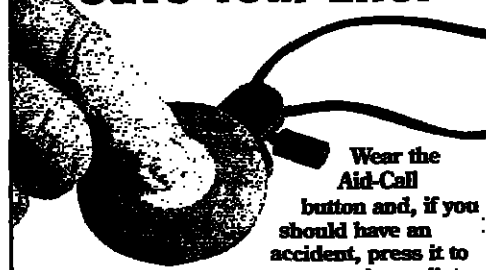
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A house with a strange mix of ancient and modern architectural styles that looks down on its own private beach

# Postcard views from the edge

The village of Ballinskellig in County Kerry is changing fast. Along the pot-holed lanes, derelict fishermen's cottages sit next to renovated farms, rickety bars beside squire's retreats.

As we crawled up the drive, the view of the house, with its spiky roof and glassy add-ons, sank my Ballykissangel-induced preconceptions. The architecture is redolent of the new "Guinness-shire", where stone is mixed with chrome and potato chips give way to micro-

chips. Boolakeel House is a hybrid of flashy rock-star pad, traditional working farmhouse and modern Scandinavian chalet. The location makes up for any architectural indiscretions. It is a house on the edge. The wind blows down the chimneys and pogoos on the slates, bringing with it the harshness of the rugged coastline and the warmth of the Gulf Stream. In the vast gardens, the elements provide ample tonic to revive you after a night in the local bar.

The original part of the house is 300-400 years old. The rest has evolved over the years, a project devised and completed by the current owner. This makes for an illogical layout. Cosy winter rooms with roaring peat fires adjoin lighter spaces with picture windows. In the winter dining room and morning room, the original timbers and heavy stone lull you to sleep, promising dreams of tinkers and little folk. In the kitchen, modern handmade fittings sit next to an antique butcher's block.

At the front of the house in the reception-area-cum-sitting-room there is a heavy inglenook fireplace, perfect for roasting chestnuts, although it sits uncomfortably in a room with light wood floors and stairs. A carved bar in the corner with comfy swivel stools creates the ambience of an American theme bar.

Off the hall, a fine study with intricately carved bookshelves, a pretty slate fireplace and coastline



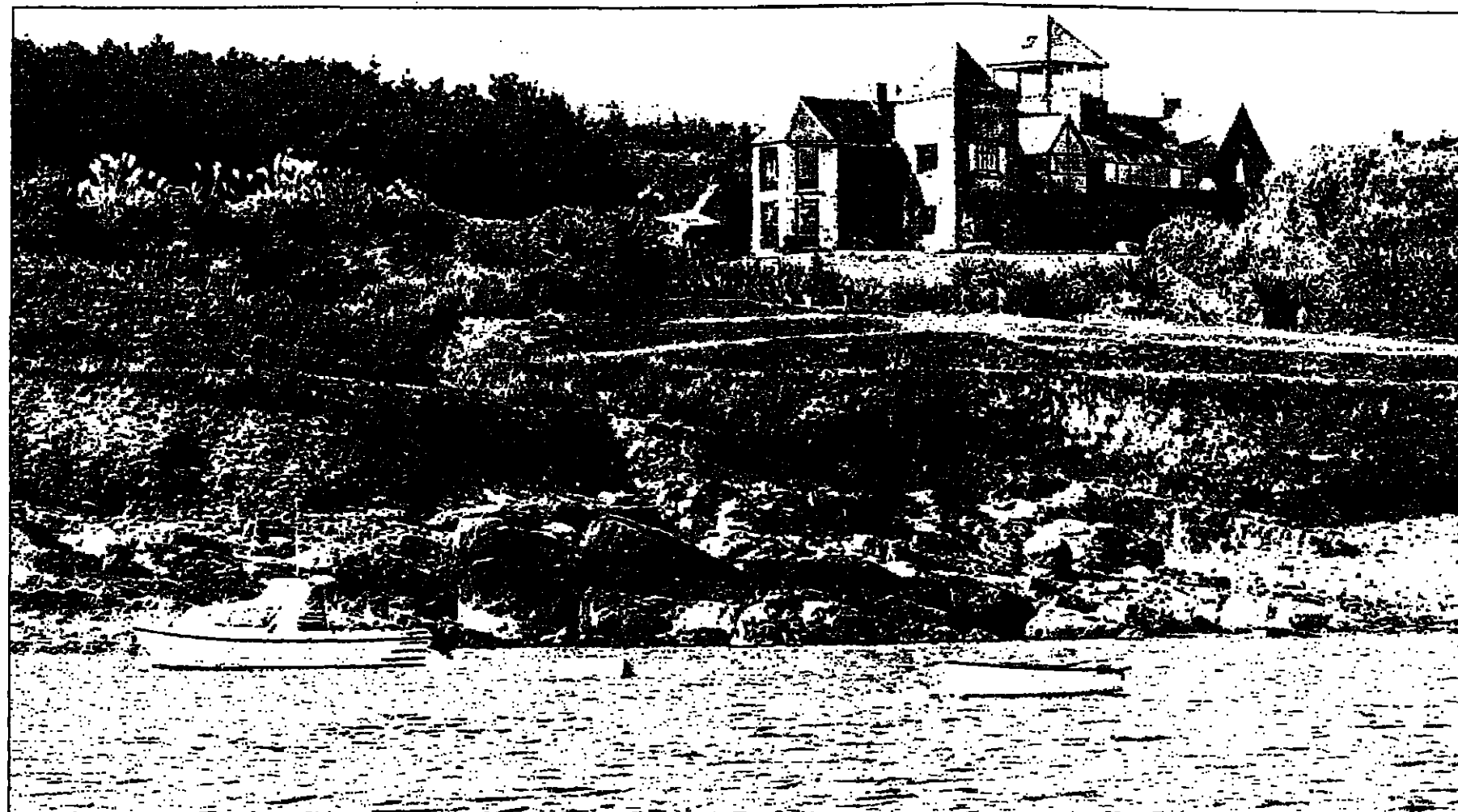
Boolakeel House in Ballinskellig on the coast of County Kerry is a hybrid of flashy rock-star pad, traditional working farmhouse and modern Scandinavian chalet. Off the hall is a study (left) with carved bookshelves and a slate fireplace. At the front of the house in the reception-area-cum-sitting-room (below left) there is an inglenook fireplace and a staircase of original 300-400 year old timbers (below right)

views ensure that you while away the day. At the back of the house, the summer dining room is light with the warmth and trappings of a botanical hot-house, with glass roof, understocked aquarium and jungle of plants.

Starting down from over the glass-topped dining table is a mural, commissioned more than ten years ago, depicting the current owner and local characters, stroking dogs and smoking flavoured tobacco. It is not a masterpiece of stroke-work, but after a night at Boolakeel I grew to like it, confident that it depicts the owner's famous hospitality.

There are six bedrooms upstairs. The master bedroom, with its own dressing room, is bright and airy with the clean sheen of a Habitat catalogue. The en suite bathroom is a vision in peach marble with steps up to a large sunken bath and views out to sea.

A narrow staircase leads you from the first floor to the confines of a glass lookout. Small, square and



perfectly positioned, it is a place to paint, birdwatch and check up on your neighbours. It is so quiet it is difficult to remember that before the potato famine Ballinskellig was a village bursting at the seams. This was much to the distress of the

local monks, who fled to the nearby Skellig Islands to escape the idle chatter of mainland gossip-mongers.

The 100 acres of cultivated gardens surrounding Boolakeel are a tribute to the current owner's

ambition. He and his wife have planted more than half a million plants and shrubs since they moved here 25 years ago. She is a world-class potato expert, who is writing a definitive spud anthology. Many varieties of the starchy fruits of her

labours are to be found in the expansive vegetable gardens.

Closer to the house, pines and spruces provide a wind-break around the ten acres of tropical gardens which boast many species of exotica. In what must have

amounted to a huge earth-moving operation, large ponds have been ingeniously created between beds of shrubs, lines of trees and walls of hydrangeas.

The hidden treasure of Boolakeel is the private beach below the rocky edge. Imagine novelty smugglers, striped T-shirts and well-stocked treasure chests. This is Enid Blyton country: "The Adventures of Boolakeel Bay". There are enough nooks and crannies, hidden caves, banshee-like sound-effects and skinny dipping possibilities to keep George, Timmy et al busy for the

hols. In the summer this is the obvious place to entertain. Set up a barbeque and serve up sand-flecked lobster and seabass kebabs. Stomp over the sand, make life-changing decisions, then watch them dissolve into a tall glass of Murphy's down the road at Patsy's Place.

ALEX O'CONNELL

● Agent: Knight Frank, 0171-629 8171.

## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

● Asking price: £1.2 million ● Shopping: Fresh sea-food – lobsters, sea bass, salmon; Cork for city fancies village art shop for arts and crafts ● Entertainment: Salmon fishing, birdwatching, boating in the bay, swimming off the beach, shooting in season, drinking, recovering ● Travel: Regular flights to Cork and Shannon. The train service was uprated in the 1950s, so a car is a necessity unless you live like a monk

## JOHN D WOOD & CO

LONDON AND COUNTRY ESTATE AGENTS ESTABLISHED 1872



WILTSHIRE - Corsham Bath 8 miles Price Guide: £650,000  
A fine Grade II\* 17th century house with lovely grounds and stone outbuildings. 8 beds, 4 baths, shower rm, 5 receps, 2 kts, attic rms, saddle rm, Dovecot, 2 bed cottage, outbuildings incl. 10 stables & garage, walled garden, formal gardens, paddocks. About 2.6 ha (6.4 acres).  
CHRISTOPHER BLOUNT & CO: 01666 825725 JOHN D WOOD & CO: 01285 642244

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WIMBLEDON: 0181-944 7172

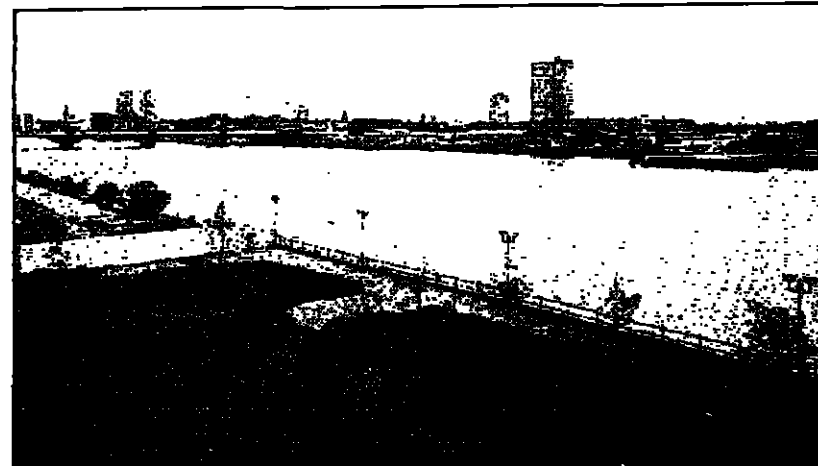
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WINCHESTER: 01962 863131  
HONG KONG: 00 852 2 872 5146

26 CURZON STREET, LONDON W1P 6LD  
0171-493 4106 FAX: 0171-629 6071

### LETTINGS AND MANAGEMENT

To let your house or flat: Central London 0171-491 4311  
North London 0171-722 3336 Wimbledon & Surrey 0181-946 9447  
South of the M4 01256 398004 North of the M4 01865 311522



REGENT ON THE RIVER, SW6 Lease to 2989 £350,000  
On the third floor of this prestigious riverside development, a wonderfully light flat with uninterrupted river views. 3 beds, 2 baths, shower rm, reception, kitchen, balcony, lift, underground parking space, communal gardens, membership of the Harbour Club.  
FULHAM: 0171-731 4223



VICARAGE GARDENS, W8 Freehold £1,300,000  
An attractive end-of-terrace Victorian family house, facing south with a garden and garage. 5 bedrooms, dressing room, 2 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, utility area, kitchenette, cloakroom, patio, garden, garage.  
KENSINGTON: 0171-727 0705

### PRIMROSE HILL, NW1

In a popular crescent near Regents Park and Primrose Hill, a semi-detached house in need of refurbishment with a 24.38m (80ft) garden.

4/5 bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, 2 cloakrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, utility room. 5 1/2 flat with bed sitting room, kitchen and bathroom.

Freehold  
£575,000

ST JOHN'S WOOD:  
0171-722 5556



### OXFORDSHIRE Asthall Leigh

A detached bungalow with 1.82 ha (4.25 acres) including an all-weather tennis court, paddocks and stabling. 4/5 beds with en suite bath, 2 receps, kit, utility rm. Ground flr annex of sitting rm, bed 5 and bathroom. Double garage, barns, gardens.

Price Guide:  
£295,000

OXFORD:  
01865 311522



RAYNERS ROAD, Putney, SW15 Freehold Price Guide: £550,000  
A Victorian house of about 410 sq m (4420 sq ft) with great potential for a family house or other uses, subject to planning. Potentially 8/9 beds, 5 baths, 4 receptions, kitchen, 1/2 bath rm, cloakroom, laundry, cellar, garage, parking, 26m x 19m (85ft x 60ft) garden.  
WIMBLEDON: 0181-944 7172



### THE SHRUBBERY, Lavender Gardens, SW11

Close to Clapham Common, in a restored listed building of sixteen elegant apartments, a spectacular, beautifully presented ground floor flat with wonderful ceiling heights and period detail.

2 bedrooms, bathroom, large reception room, kitchen, designated parking space.

Share of freehold  
£260,000

BATTERSEA:  
0171-228 0174

### HAMPSHIRE Lymington

A penthouse flat with exceptional views overlooking the town quay and Lymington River. 3 beds, bath, shower, rm, c/krm, recep, kitchen, roof terrace, sauna, rear balcony, under cover parking.

Leasehold  
Price Guide:  
£175,000

LYMINGTON:  
01590 677233





# Three fantasies of a manor reborn

After John Gummer's call for new country houses, we asked three architects to design a dream manor

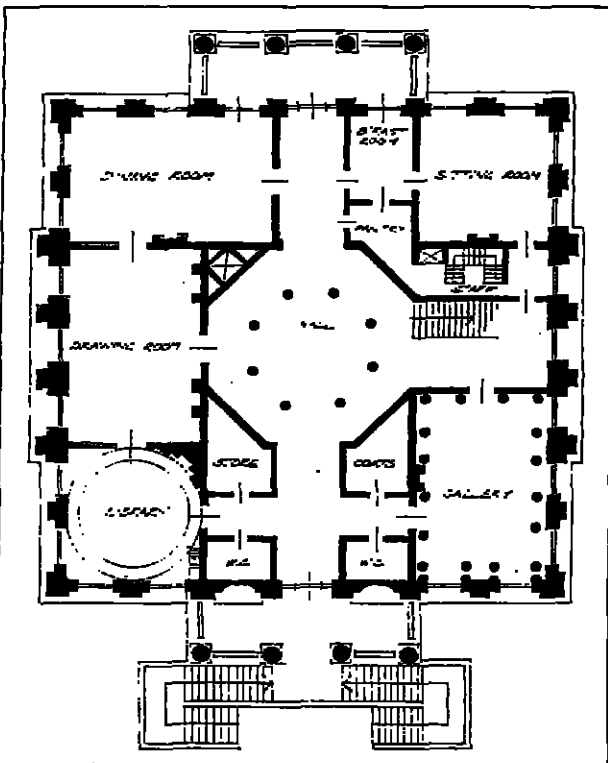
The Environment Secretary's decision to encourage a new generation of stately homes to "enhance" our countryside came as a welcome surprise to the country's growing number of millionaires. John Gummer intends to relax planning rules which have made it almost impossible to get local authority planning permission for new country houses.

"An isolated new house in the countryside may exceptionally be justified if it is clearly of the highest quality," Mr Gummer says in new planning guidance to local authority planners, published on February 19.

It will be up to local councillors to decide whether to grant planning permission for the mansions, which would have to be of "truly outstanding" design. But Mr Gummer is making sure there will be no blots on the landscape: he will have the final say.

The Times asked three architects what they could offer, given a free hand to design a new stately home. The place we suggested for our fantasy is the 1,400-acre Estcourt Park estate, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire, which has a drive of sweet chestnuts that leads nowhere, the handsome Cotswold mansion it once served having gone. But there is outline planning permission for a new manor on the old site. Our architects came up with three quite different manor houses.

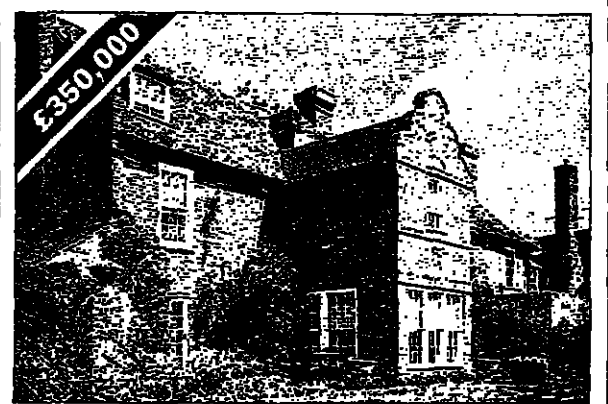
CHRISTINE WEBB



The ground-floor plan of Robert Adam's Italianate manor

FOR SALE

VILLAGE HOUSES



KENT: Wingham Court, Wingham. Grade II\* listed village house in a 1.7-acre walled garden with a range of period outbuildings. Six bedrooms, three bathrooms (two en-suite), four reception rooms, study, kitchen, domestic offices and two cellars. Self-contained one-bedroom annexe. About £350,000 (Strutt & Parker, 01227 451123).

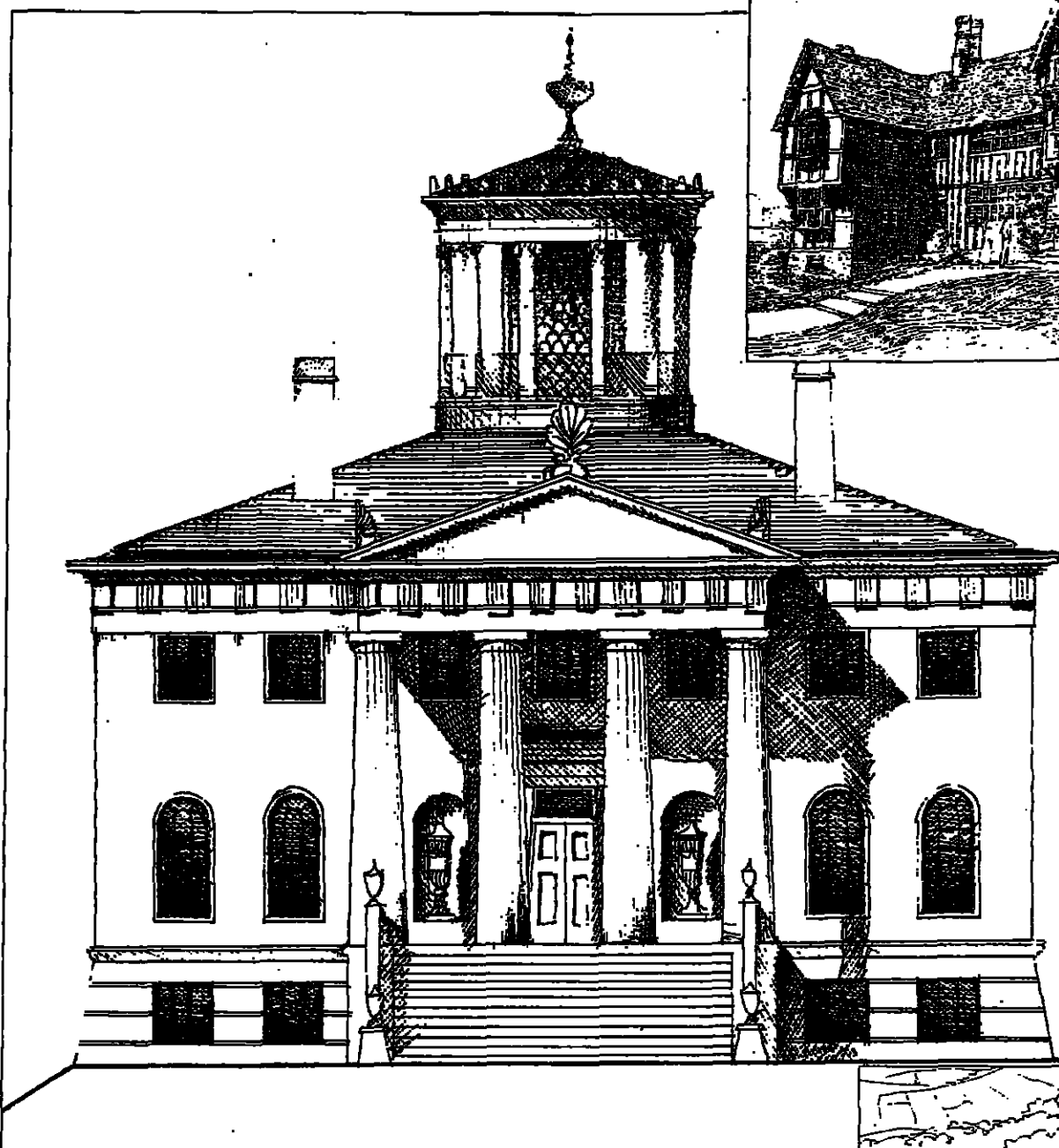


GLoucestershire: Holly Cottage, Rectory Lane, Bourton-on-the-Hill, near Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Grade II listed 17th-century detached village cottage in a pretty garden. Four bedrooms, bathroom, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room with Aga, utility room and cloakroom. Stone barn/garaging. About £248,000 (Hamptons, 01386 852205).



Herefordshire: Hawkesbury, Kimbolton, Leominster. Refurbished 18th-century house in a third-of-an-acre garden, on the edge of a village. Four bedrooms, dressing room, two bathrooms, three reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room and cloakroom. Outbuildings and garage. About £190,000 (Knight Frank, 01432 273087).

CHERYL TAYLOR



The glass-faced cupola forms the roof of a double-height central hall, allowing in light

## CLASSICAL

ROBERT ADAM specialises in the classical style favoured by designers of grand houses in the Cotswolds. Because he has worked on projects for the Prince of Wales, whose Highgrove House estate borders Estcourt Park, he seemed a particularly apt choice to carry out our brief.

Of our three fantasies, his is the most likely to coincide with the wishes of Cotswold planners, who usually expect designs to fit in with the local character of the area. Yet, while his design might look conventional, there is more to it than meets the eye.

The building has a central, glass-faced cupola which forms the roof of a double-height central hall, allowing light through to the heart of the building.

"The fun thing about it is that you're taking the type of design that was built by Palladio, an Italianate building type, and giving it a Greek twist," says Mr Adam, of Upper High Street, Winchester, Hampshire. "It shows how flexible the classical vocabulary can be. For example, the Greeks didn't use arches but I've used them on the

windows and it somehow makes the building look more friendly. There are urns in wall niches, which are very Greek, and the cupola on the rotunda is Greek-inspired as well.

"At 4,000 square feet, the house is very usable and pleasant. One corner has a sitting room, breakfast room and pantry, with a dumb waiter to the kitchen. Above that is a bedroom suite that opens on to the balcony.

"Access to nearly all the rooms is off the central hall, so there are no corridors, and each room has a view of the landscape. There is a basement for the kitchens, and a separate garaging and staff living quarters.

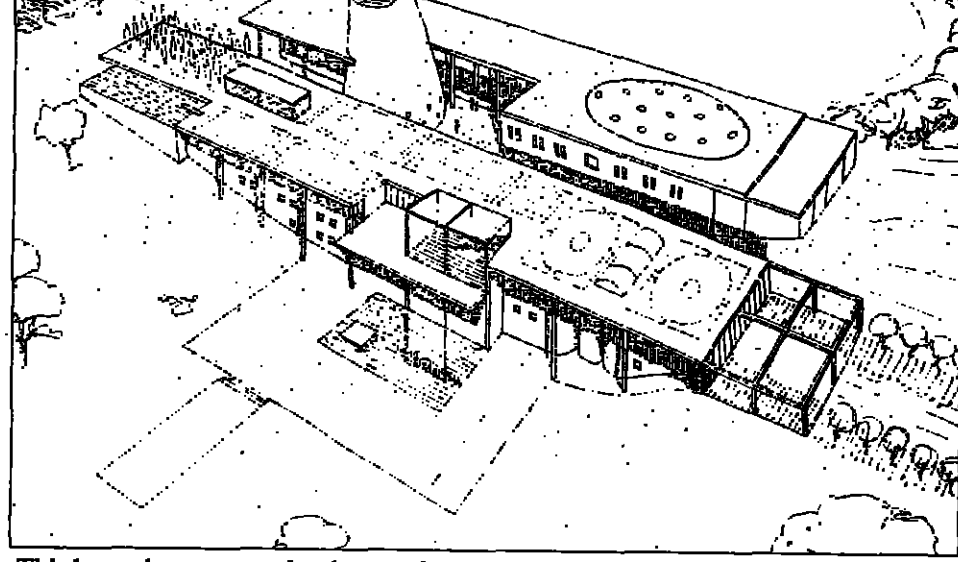
"The whole building can be scaled up or down in size, because it is square, and a principle of classical design is that it is based on proportions relative to each other.

"Small buildings can be given scale by introducing full-height columns. This building is 40ft high. The principal rooms have 15ft-high ceilings, but if the building was two-thirds this size it would still look the same."

THE PARTNERSHIP Baker-Brown McKay of Lewes, East Sussex, won the House of the Future competition in 1993 organised by the Royal Institution of British Architects. Its winning design was built at the 1994 Future World Exhibition at Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. The partners now lecture on sustainable design at the University of Brighton, Sussex, so their imaginative house is futuristic and gives environmental considerations priority.

"Whoever owns this house will be wealthy enough to have a collection of art and antiquities, and will open up the galleries to the public," Duncan Baker-Brown says. "Landscape will be important to this person, who will plant the whole area with native trees to recreate the landscape as it used to be, though there would be a clearing for the house, which would be set in a natural dip.

"The northern, copper walls of the new manor will stretch like a curtain between the grass banks. Once inside you can pass through various layers dedicated to culture, nature, fun and recreation, including a virtual reality area where people 'travel the world' until you finally arrive



This house has green technology and processes its own electricity, sewage and water

## FUTURISTIC

in the private hub of the house, away from prying eyes.

"To one side of the kitchen are gardens supplying year-round organic produce. The main, formal gardens are on the roof of the house.

"Although the building is 14,000 square feet, it has the latest green technology and is a zero energy house — it will not be connected to mains

electricity, because it creates its own power using photovoltaic panels; it processes its own sewage and collects and processes its own water.

"The dining room has a glass skylight to provide natural light, and there is a winter garden on the roof for year-round relaxation, plus a swimming pool.

"Because it is such a long

building it needs ventilation, which is provided naturally by the tower, which has a glass roof and acts as a solar chimney, drawing air out.

"Gardens demonstrate the ideas behind permaculture and forest gardening.

"Like a traditional country house, there are entertaining areas — we're not turning our backs on the fact that a country house is for inviting people to house parties, and for impressing people."

## Pine lovers' strip show

Cheryl Taylor on how to sand and varnish a pine floor the easy way

One of the least expensive ways to transform an ordinary looking room is to expose a bit of wood. If you have pine lurking beneath layers of paint, or hidden under a shag-pile carpet, try uncovering it.

A quick burst of stripping and dipping will not only turn heads but also add value to your home. If you think it sounds like hard work, you may have been listening to die-hard pine enthusiasts who maintain there is no substitute for hand-stripping.

Those of us with better things to do simply nip down to the nearest tool hire shop for floor-sanding equipment. Armed with this formidable mechanical power, and a tin of "antique pine" coloured varnish, we can achieve a similar "real beauty" effect in a matter of hours.

Although this is the lazy way, operating a sanding machine does require some strength. The floor sander, which looks like a cross between a lawn mower and a vacuum cleaner, has a tendency to run away with you. An electricity circuit breaker should be used in case you run over the cable. Stout shoes are

essential, because sanding your bare feet will do more than polish your toenails.

Before starting on a floor, make sure that all the nail or screw heads are hammered below the surface of the wood, otherwise you will end up tearing the sanding sheets.

Floorboards are sanded first with a coarse sanding sheet, and then with finer sheets until the required finish is obtained. A small, hand-held edging machine is then used to sand up to the skirting boards. A bit of elbow grease and conventional sandpaper are needed to get into the corners.

Finally, the floor surface should be dust-free and clean and dry before varnishing.

Many tool hire shops provide a package, comprising a floor sander and edger for about £30 to £40 for 24 hours — long enough to sand the average room. The charge for an additional day's hire is about £10 to £15. In addition, you will have to buy sanding sheets, which cost about £20 for an average room.

Widely spaced floorboards pose a few problems — unless you don't mind the wind howling through the gaps. You could always throw a rug



Cheryl Taylor's son, Joseph, gets down to work on the newly stripped and varnished floor

over them on chilly days, or buy some filler to stop the gaps. Most DIY stores sell tubs of plastic wood, neutral or pine-tinted, costing about 50p for a quarter of a litre, which can be pushed into the spaces between the stripped boards using a flexible knife.

If the gaps are extensive, it is likely to be a long, messy job — and an expensive one. The end result may not be satisfactory — floorboards move as you

walk on them and the filler may fall out.

The best solution is to lift the floorboards and move them closer together, adding an extra board to fill in the space left at the edge.

Pine-stripping by dipping, which can transform internal doors, cupboards, tables and chests, is inexpensive but a job best left to the specialists. Filling your bath with caustic soda is not recommended,

especially when it costs as little as £12 to £15 to have a standard door dipped professionally.

Pine enthusiasts, of course, will complete the job and strip the door frames by hand. Those of us who have tried this, scraping away night after night using industrial amounts of paint stripper, prefer to leave the frames exactly as they are. You can, after all, have too much of a good thing.

## PROPERTY NEWS

■ HOUSE prices are 8.5 per cent higher than this time last year, according to Nationwide. Amanda Loose writes: Rises have been fuelled by a lack of supply, with an increase of only 0.7 per cent last month. Nationwide reports that the average cost of a house is now £55,621 — £4,365 more than in February 1996.

■ WETHERBY Studio in Wetherby Place, South Kensington, London is for sale for £350,000. It has been home to actor Christopher Reeve and Tony Hicks, a former member of the Kinks. The unmodernised studio includes 20 sq ft of space with a vaulted ceiling and gallery, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. Contact Douglas & Gordon, 0171-225 1225.

■ ARABLE land prices in the eastern counties of Britain — from Lincolnshire to Essex — rose by 20 per cent last year, reports Strutt & Parker. The average price of land available with vacant possession rose to £2,675 per acre, with demand expected to remain high.

■ DEMAND continues to outstrip supply in the prime central London market, says the agent Aylesford, with many of last year's successful sellers finding themselves homeless as they compete with the increasing number of international buyers. Properties priced about £600,000 this time last year are now going for about £1 million and Aylesford fears it will have little to offer the annual influx of wealthy overseas buyers this summer.

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Does the explosion of chef heroes in Japanese comics mean that a breed of New Man is emerging?

# Comic relief meets nouveau cuisine

That Japanese of all ages are hooked on comics has not escaped the notice — and the sneers — of some Westerners who would not be seen dead carrying something so vulgar. But even visitors forewarned about the national *manga* (comic books) mania can be startled by the sight of grown men in trains poring over comic strips that drip with bondage, rape and mutilation.

Yet there is a lot more to manga than sex and violence. New genres of comics are emerging constantly, reflecting the new trends and preoccupations of Japanese society. There is, for example, an increasingly popular variety called the "cuisine comic", featuring chefs and gourmets as the unlikely heroes. Their goal in life is the pursuit of the ultimate in food and cooking, and this obsession lands them in some weird and wonderful adventures.

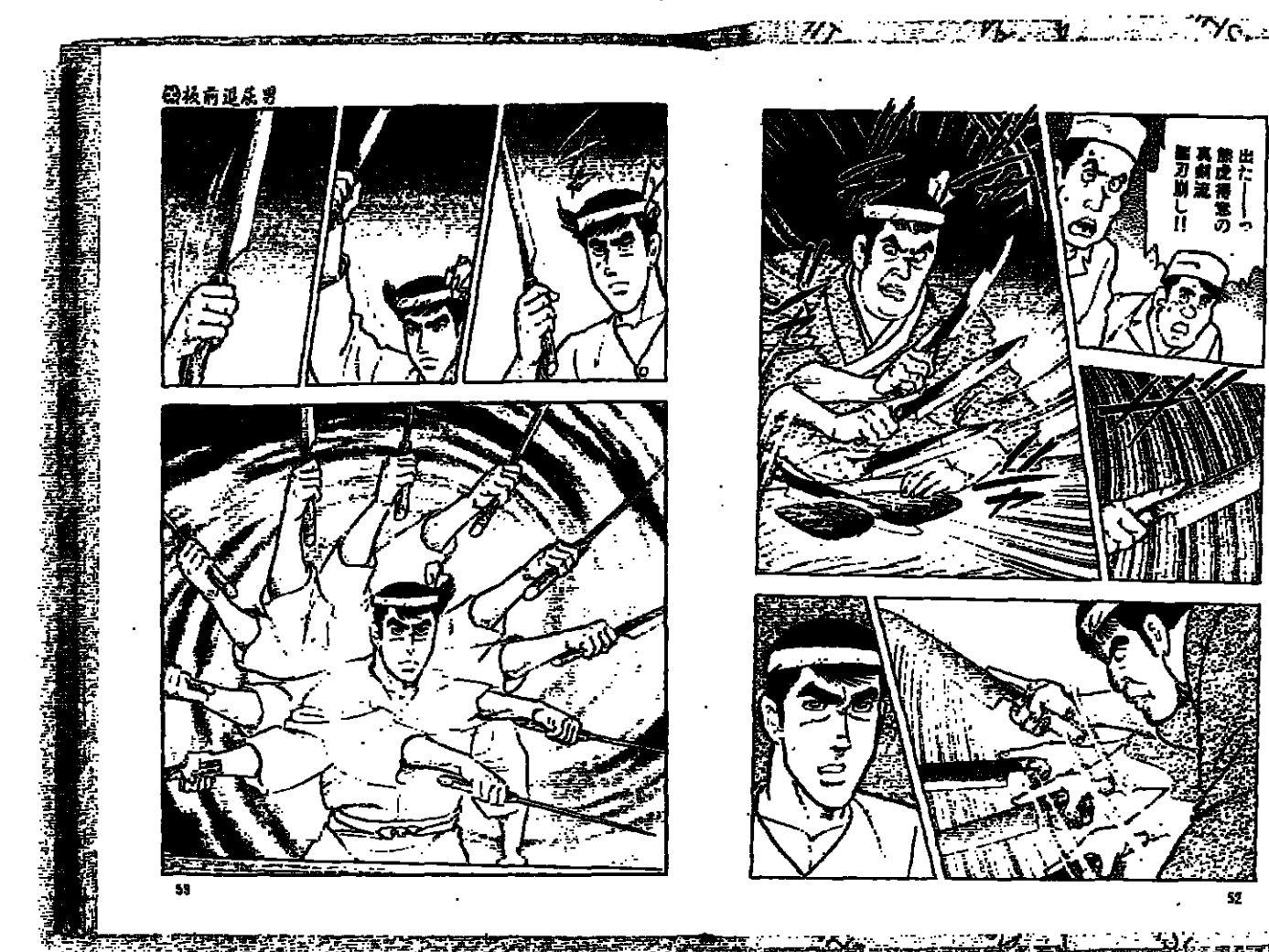
Japanese comics are in a class of their own. No other country has anything to match their sheer diversity, skilful artwork and mountainous sales. The Japanese soak up 1.2 billion comic books (many as thick as telephone directories) each year — about 30 per cent of the nation's total output of magazines and books.

More than 1,000 titles (the majority appear monthly or weekly) cover every imaginable subject, with many speciality comics devoted solely to dramas centring on golf, child-rearing and, most recently, oldies in retirement — a reflection of Japan's rapidly ageing society.

Manga are devoured by Japanese of all age and social groups. Take one of those packed commuter trains. One passenger, with grey sideboards, perhaps on his way to work in a bank or government ministry, is immersed in sex-packed *Bonanza*.

Sitting alongside him is a spotty teenager in black school uniform, lapping up the adventures of baseball heroes and ingenious schoolboys in *Weekly Shonen Jump*, the bestselling comic magazine with a five million circulation (read by boys from 16 to 60, according to the publishers). A slender young woman squashed in the corner by the door is reading the popular twice-monthly comic magazine *You*, a bizarre mix of domestic dramas and sex stories all written by women.

"It's impossible to understand modern Japanese society properly without studying manga," says



Here's one I prepared earlier: cuisine comics have been cashing in on a gourmet boom in Japan with heroes like samurai swordsmen.

Minobu Shiozawa, a writer and commentator. "They mirror society and the way it changes."

The mainstays of comics for women, for example, have traditionally been European aristocrats, sportswomen, homosexual boys and bisexual princesses: all non-threatening species. The curiously titled *Liberal White*, for example, is full of stories about effeminate male doctors' love affairs. But recent years have seen a boom in women's comics about the struggle to carve out a career in a male-dominated world. Stories about how women professionals outwit their male rivals in the office are highly popular, and this mirrors the trend of modern Japanese women to forsake the kitchen sink for a career.

Frederick Schodt, author of *The*

*World of Japanese Comics*, maintains that manga perform a useful social function. "They provide a brilliant fantasy release in a crowded, tightly controlled society," he says. "Immersed in a comic book, the average salaryed worker is allowed a brief escape from everyday life where a man is no more than a cog in a vast, well-oiled machine." However, the great unknown is how readers, and especially teenagers, are influenced by the barrage of pornography. After all, some magazines specialise in stories about women being tied up and tortured, and scenes of rape even

**'The comic books mirror our society and the way it changes'**

creep into many general interest comics. Japan has one of the lowest levels of violent crime among industrialised nations, but it is widely acknowledged that the low rape figures mask a vast number of cases that go unreported. Tokyo's crowded trains are notorious for the huge number of incidents of *chikan* — the brazen molesting of women — which is the sort of abuse glorified in many popular comic books.

It is a relief to report that millions of men are turning to "cuisine comics" for less gory entertainment. Japanese men who have never

battered a slice of bread are among the most ardent fans. The two biggest stars of this genre are Shota, the sushi-master in the comic series *Shota's Sushi*, and trainee chef Ryosuke Kure, the protagonist of *Wanderer With a Kitchen Knife*. These cooks are no dummies. They are ruthless in their desire to produce state-of-the-art fried carp or a spring roll of heavenly succulence. They wield their fearsome sashimi knives with the deadly precision of samurai swordsmen, but fortunately only to eviscerate a sea-bream or cut a puffer fish into slices so thin that you can see through them.

Japanese are fond of such manga, which blend fantasy with reality, entertainment with education. One such is *Oishinbo* (*The Gourmet*), which sells up to two million copies.

Shiro Yamaoka, the central figure, is a "food journalist" whose life's work is to track down the ultimate epicurean sensation. Each issue delights the reader with new, delectable and sometimes nauseous creations such as a vividly drawn recipe comic on cooking brains fried in lemon butter sauce.

The half-dozen food comics are cashing in on the "gourmet boom" which has spawned restaurants offering everything from Ethiopian to Tibetan food. They also reflect a revival of pride in Japan's own cuisine, which may be increasingly popular in Britain and America, but is scorned by many younger Japanese in favour of McDonald's and Pizza Hut. However, there is no evidence as yet that men are emulating the heroic chefs and gourmets by venturing into the kitchen, regarded strictly as the bailiwick of the woman in Japan.

I boil water for pot noodles when I get home because I'm too tired to do anything else," says Jiro Ikehashi, a 25-year-old laboratory assistant who is still single. "Of course I'd like to make one of Shiro's fantastic meals, but I always get back late and would never have the time."

Achieving the sublime meal is perhaps the least important element of these exploits. The common thread is the religious dedication with which the protagonists pursue their goal.

The Japanese love affair with manga is not all that difficult to understand. Comic artists are in a class of their own, creating cinematic effects like zoom shots, varying camera angles and fade-ins. One peculiarity of the artwork is the size of the characters' eyes. Illustrators have discovered that big round eyes like those of Westerners have the greatest appeal to Japanese comic book fans. The frames even come with a "sound track" of special words representing sounds: such as "suzururi" for noodles being slurped, and "shashsha" for swishing knives. Comic books have also enriched the language with the sound of silence — "shin".

Even people of highbrow tastes, who openly dismiss comic books as infantile, often get hooked when they start flicking through the pages — as an elderly professor teaching at Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University sheepishly confessed to me.

ROBERT WHYMANT

## A VET WRITES

**Q** We have just acquired a beagle called Thumper from a rescue home. He's settled down very well and is fairly obedient, but pulls very hard on the lead. Would a choke collar help, or would a harness be better?

**A** Beagles are not the brightest of dogs and Thumper might be very old before he starts to realise he is strangling himself by pulling while on a choke collar and he could damage his throat in the process. A harness would help Thumper to pull more efficiently. Try a Halti, which is a dog-adapted version of the halter used for horses and cattle for hundreds of years. The lead is attached to the Halti beneath the dog's chin, so every time he pulls, his head has to turn to one side. And he can't pull if his neck is bent. Many pet shops stock them or phone the Company of Animals on 01932 566696.

**Q** Our one-year-old West Highland White terrier has been lame in her right back leg for two months. The vet diagnosed Perthes' disease. What is this and what is the cause and prognosis?

**A** Perthes' disease is an abnormality of the hip. Something unknown interferes with the blood supply to the head of the femur. It becomes malformed and misshapen. The hip doesn't work properly, arthritis develops, and the dog is lame. There seems to be an inherited predisposition to this problem. Only the smaller breeds of dogs are affected. Surgical removal of the femoral head is the usual long-term remedy. In the majority of cases this stops the pain and within a few weeks the dog can gallop about without any difficulty, although he may not win a 100-yard sprint.

**Q** My friend has two budgerigars and one of them perches on one leg. She says the vet had diagnosed gout. Was he serious? Do birds get gout?

**A** Yes, usually in the toe joints. White patches, which are deposits of urate crystals, can be seen on the bottom of the foot. It's a painful condition and treatment isn't very effective. The bird can be made more comfortable by putting a small piece of turf on the floor of the cage so he can rest his bad foot on a soft surface.

## JAMES ALLCOCK

Readers should write to: The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9AT. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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Cato needs discipline

CATO is a tan male mongrel who is about 18 months old. He has had no training and has boundless energy, so he will need a disciplined and active new home, without cats or children.

Contact the Dogs Home Battersea, 4 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4AA (0171-622 3626).

# No more help for Humphrey?

Blue Cross, the charity that treats thousands of pets annually, faces a cash crisis in its centenary year



Hazel Anscombe with Trixie who has an infection

There were 17 people with sick pets in the waiting room when I arrived at the Blue Cross Animal Care charity one Thursday morning recently. The notice that greeted us said: "Please do not ask us where you are in the queue. It will not get you seen any quicker and it slows us down. We are very busy. Please be patient."

Later this month, on March 19, the Queen will visit the centre as its centenary patron. The charity needs to raise £2.7 million in its centenary year or face closure, something that has never happened, not even during the blitz.

The charity was founded in 1897 as Our Dumb Friends' League and made an early impact as a radical campaigning charity fighting for better conditions for working horses. In 1898 it began campaigning against crabs and lobsters being boiled alive and it was also very active during the First World War saving horses injured on the battlefields.

Today, with a staff of about 50, including 30 nurses and

nine vets, the centre behind Victoria Station provides care for the pets of those too poor to afford a vet's fees (they are asked to make a donation), and campaigns to improve conditions for animals in transit for slaughter. In 1992 it became the first animal charity to employ an animal behaviourist to help owners of problem pets.

There have been famous visitors to the hospital. Humphrey, the Downing Street cat, wandered in, unrecognised, and was treated like any other stray. He was well on his way to being found a loving home before somebody recognised him as Westminster's top cat and returned him.

Buster, Roy Hattersley's Staffordshire bull terrier, proved one of the more difficult customers on animal behaviourist Steve Collis's private client list. At the start of his treatment, he slipped his

leash while Mr Hattersley was walking him and dispatched a Canada goose in St James's Park. Mr Collis is persevering with Buster.

The charity is situated in Westminster and its cash crisis is apparent in the condition of the building. Paint flakes from the walls. Missing ceiling tiles expose decrepit wiring and bits of ceiling flutter down into the operating theatre.

Masonry above the almoner's office crumbles to the pavement and the sparsely-stocked library is used as overflow accommodation for pets.

There are days when the centre is so busy you have to skirt around animals recovering in the corridors because there is no space anywhere else. And sometimes animals needing non-invasive surgery have to be bundled from the operating table on to the floor to make way for the next case.

Anabel Wilson, the charity's

full-time fundraiser, gave me the guided tour of everything the Queen will see. It is not for the squeamish and it helps if you are a hardened fan of the surgeons in *M\*A\*S\*H*.

With the operating theatre so cramped, the surgeon barely had room to turn around. Ms Wilson said: "Like everywhere else here we don't have enough space. It's quiet today, but sometimes we can have one animal being operated on, another recovering from anaesthetic on the only other table in the room and another making do with the floor. The staff are too busy to notice how bad things are."

Room has been made for an emergency overflow operating theatre by using the boardroom. "The board now meets in the depths of an outbuilding underneath our offices,"

Laboratory manager Stuart

Jack Crossley

● You can send a donation to the Blue Cross Animal Charity at: Room 388A, Shilton Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4PF.

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'It's not that I long to fall into the embrace of an all-knowing deity: a giant Daddy figure in the sky. But I do envy the serenity of believers'

## It all started with a didgeridoo

### LIFE AND SOUL



GINNY DOUGARY

His name was Bear. In the clinical, brightly lit setting of the art gallery, he looked incongruous and slightly scary. He was not an Aboriginal or black or even Australian, although he affected to be all three. His face was painted to resemble a landscape of white planes with boundary lines of white dots. His hair was dotted with white dots. Whatever else he could not be or do — dig up a witchetty grub, lay claim to the secrets of Dreamtime — Bear knew how to play his didgeridoo.

He was sitting barefoot and cross-legged, gazing up at one of the Aboriginal paintings on the gallery wall and playing his amazing instrument. From deep in his wooden tube, Bear was able to summon the sounds of kookaburras, dingoes and kangaroos hopping through the bush. Sometimes the creatures resisted him. "I wasn't concentrating hard enough," he explained. "I didn't visualise it properly."

Our younger son thought Bear was the business. Our older son was transfixed. In fact, all the children who had been dragged around by their parents to see

this boring old art stuff on a Saturday afternoon found Bear and his cherry-wood tubes — hollowed out by termites in Australia's red heart — as compelling as the children of Hamelin found the Pied Piper.

Most of the adults were as dumbstruck as the children. My husband volunteered himself for an impromptu "healing session". I could feel my toes curling with embarrassment as the crowd gathered to witness the spectacle of one grown man, lying on the floor, being tickled by another grown man with a big stick. My husband emerged from the experience with a beatific smile on his face, and I tried not to pretend that I didn't know him.

Cynicism is only part of my problem. Like a puritan with a decadent streak, I scoff at the very thing that attracts me. I am both drawn and repelled by any open display of communication with the

unknown. The rather half-hearted Anglicanism of my upbringing has long since lapsed, and nothing has yet replaced it. A colleague of mine and I used to bemoan our Godless state. We still phone each other from time to time and inquire after our "spiritual desert". It's not that I really feel that life is arid or that I long to fall into the embrace of an all-seeing, all-knowing deity: a giant Daddy figure in the sky. But I do envy the serenity and certainty of true believers.

In my circle, only one couple has any kind of spiritual life — a form of Japanese

Buddhism which they have been following for almost 20 years. I know no Bible readers and the churchgoers are motivated by their desire to get their children into the church primary school. (Although one or two of them have said how much they now look forward to that oasis of calm in a hectic life.)

Conventional Christianity — as a deeply held faith — seems so rare today that it is almost exotic. Even politicians — hardly the least cynical of people — seem to have turned their backs on old-style religion in favour of spiritual mentors: the Clintons have Deepak

Chopra, while Tony Blair has his Australian teacher-priest, Peter Thomson.

In recent decades there have been so many false gods and gurus — from Bhagwan Rajneesh to Werner Erhard to last year's fallen messiah, the raver Reverend Chris Brain — all competing to win the souls and salaries of people who are desperate to believe in something, as long as it comes in an unorthodox package.

Est. Exegesis. Insight... there was a time in the mid-Seventies when you couldn't go to a party without meeting someone who had forked out 200 quid for a weekend of self-discovery. Instant Enlightenment — as one expose documentary called it — plus VAT.

I remember one party (and I only twigged half-way through) which was thrown by Est initiates to work on their friends to join the organisation. Several

of our hosts — all attractive, confident young men and women — had firsts from Oxford. But then brains and privilege do not eradicate the need for belief — however bogus or misguided a form it takes.

Music or landscape can fill me with a sense of awe which is akin, I am sure, to other people's spiritual bliss. The closest I have felt to this state was in an empty creek near Alice Springs. The red, humming earth and the blaze of blue sky, preternaturally vivid, filled the senses: at a deeper level, it was like being pierced by an ancient, mysterious energy.

So when Bear played his didgeridoo, I was reminded for a brief moment of that sensation of beauty and otherworldliness, before my shutters came down. In the car home, I muttered about Bear — "Bear", for goodness sake — and all his nonsense about having to "visualise" his animals in order to bring them to life.

"Mum," my oldest son said, in slightly plying tones, "that's just because you're a typical grown-up, and grown-ups have forgotten how to have fun."

## What will my parents say?

Breaking the news of your sexuality to your parents can have devastating consequences, says Judy Goodkin

Before Sally Jones spoke the words guaranteed to sink the stoutest parental heart — "Sit down mum and dad, there's something I've got to tell you..." — she went up to her bedroom and decided which of her belongings she would take with her when they kicked her out.

She knew the stakes were high yet, at 19, after several years spent covering her tracks, Sally felt unable to continue concealing the fact that she did not share the same sexual identity as her parents. "I have always been very close to my mum and dad, that's why I didn't want there to be any no-go areas between us. But my friends warned me: 'Expect the worst; you might lose them.'"

The news that the child you raised in your own image, the embodiment of your hopes and dreams, aligns herself with an alternative sexuality can feel like a catastrophe. "Don't tell your father, it will kill him" is a typical response and, with many parents reacting to the revelation as they would to a death, the threat of rejection is real. But when a child does not fulfil the expectations you have set for them, do you revise those expectations or drop the child?

Last year the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard received 4,500 "coming out" calls from young gay people seeking advice on the right way to break the news to their families; only a minority of cases will have gone on to achieve an unequivocally positive reception.

Take Gaby Rolf, now 34, who informed her father at that she was likely to appear on the *Nine O'Clock News* following her noisy arrest at a gay demonstration outside Downing Street earlier that day. His first question was: "What were you doing with all those sick people?" When she replied that she was one, he told her to get out and not bother coming back.

With her parents divorced and her mother an alcoholic, Gaby had nowhere to run. "I was desperate, confused, completely isolated. I didn't know any other gay people and there

were fewer networks then than there are today, so I just kept thinking I don't fit in, I'm not how I'm supposed to be. I seriously considered suicide on more than one occasion. But I had a fantasy that if one day I had enough money, I would buy a row of houses where young gay people could live together safely." Gaby, now a social worker, doubts that she will ever see her father again.

Emma Healey, author of

When I finally said 'Mum, I'm a lesbian' all she could reply was 'We've grown three pounds of tomatoes'

Lesbian Sex Wars, is a former employee of the Albert Kennedy Trust, a lesbian and gay charity set up to support young people at risk of being made homeless because they are gay, while working towards family reconciliation wherever possible. She believes that young gay people often mistakenly believe that telling their parents will be simple.

"Programmes like *East-Enders* make coming out look incredibly easy — it isn't. I was a politically active lesbian involved in the campaign against Section 28 and I still hadn't come out to my parents. But it's wrong to imagine that living in the closet is comfortable. The truth is that it feels pretty awful having a whole side of your life that you can't share. You should be able to talk to your family about falling in love."

Elation drove Rachel Armstrong to rush in unprepared and break the news to her father. "After a difficult and confusing adolescence, I was 17 and having a really good time. It felt as though I had

just discovered a whole new side of myself. I was so pleased that I even gave a teen magazine an interview all about being a newly out young lesbian. That gave me the prompt I needed to be able to say 'Dad, in case you're thinking of buying a copy of *Just Seventeen*, don't be shocked when you find me in it.'"

Now 22, she still laughs at her father's reaction. "Dad finds women beautiful, so he understood. Besides, he admitted that it would be terribly boring for all his children to turn out straight."

Her mother took it less well. "When I finally said 'Mum, I'm a lesbian' all she could reply was 'We've grown three pounds of tomatoes and I've just weighed the marrows and we've got such large ones this year.' She still avoids the subject, but then I don't know whether I would talk to her about boyfriends either if I had them."

Rachel's stepmother Tara — whose views are shared by Rachel's father — believes their overriding concern was for her happiness. "Goodness knows there are enough heterosexual relationships that are destructive, abusive and cruel. When she brought her lovers down to meet us we saw that she was flowering, and that's what matters most."

Her father absolutely adores women and was so glad when he thought that no hairy, smelly man would be getting his paws all over his lovely Rachel. We admire her for showing us that she had the courage of her convictions. After all, she was not to know which way it would go."

Rachel and Gaby's experiences represent opposite ends of the spectrum: the majority fall somewhere in between. Most, like Sally Jones, will have to settle for a compromise. "After the tears subsided, my parents said that, in time, they could adjust to the fact that I would never marry or produce grandchildren on condition that I did not tell my sister until she had finished her A levels and that I kept the news from my grandmother."



Gaby Rolf (right) was thrown out of home when she revealed she was a lesbian. Rachel Armstrong (left) received a more sympathetic reaction

"I didn't like the idea at first, but I knew my gran would feel extremely ashamed and constantly anxious that her friends might find out."

Ms Healey has seen enough bewilderment among parents and children to appreciate the complexity on both sides. "Kids want a lot from their parents and almost demand that they see things as they do."

"It's very easy for a child to turn their back and say 'You are rejecting me so I'll reject you'. In time, bridges can be built, but often young people don't have much time. Children must accept that their

parents' views were formed in a different generation.

"My parents couldn't help seeing my sexuality as a recipe for a life of unhappiness, misery and failure — that's how it was in their day. It is often hard for parents to see that in fact you can lead a rational, sensible, intelligent life and be a lesbian."

● The Albert Kennedy Trust: 0161-953 4059

● London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard: 0171-837 7324

● Parents' Friend national telephone helpline for parents with lesbian, gay and bisexual offspring: 01132 674627

Ruth Gledhill takes the motorway to the gentler sufferings of the Pilgrim's Way

## So that's where our pulpit went



IN THE loft of the tower of this church, an aged tambourine is stored, for inspection by interested visitors. This is not some ironic epitaph to the happy-clappy days of the 1980s but a relic from the 1800s when it was used to accompany hymns. The tambourine went out of use when the church acquired its barrel organ in the last century — and heaven help any vicar who attempts to reintroduce it here: the church is mentioned in the *Domesday Book*, and until the Reformation, the substantial house next door was the country manor of the Bishops of Rochester.

We sat in enchanting box pews at the tiny, Norman parish church of Trottscliffe. Peter and Barbara Whiteland, a rosy-cheeked couple celebrating their ruby wedding anniversary, sat devotedly near the front. Behind them sat their daughter, two grandchildren and other family members.

Above us towered a formidable pulpit, which was originally in Westminster Abbey and, somewhat to the surprise of the Dean and Chapter, who had taken it down for the

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RECTOR: The Rev Christopher Miles

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MUSIC: We, the congregation, were the choir. ★★★★★

LITURGY: 1662 Book of Common Prayer and NIV Bible. ★★★★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: Even higher than the pulpit. ★★★★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: Coffee and tea usually served. ★★★★★



Westminster's missing pulpit

coronation of George IV and failed to re-erect it, reappeared at Trottscliffe in 1824.

The village stands on the Pilgrim's Way in Kent, and parishioners are being asked to accommodate some of the hundreds of pilgrims who will take part in the 1,400th celebrations of St Augustine's arrival at Canterbury. Our first hymn was a pilgrimage hymn, and our opening sentence was confessional: "The sacrifices of God

are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. O God, thou wilt not despise." We confessed "We have strayed like lost sheep." We sang the *Venite* and, after a reading from Exodus, sang the *Benedicite, omnia Opera*, an early 20th-century chant. The church is one of four in the cure of the Rev Christopher Miles, a former engineer. The church has its own music group and I somehow found myself forking out £12 for a CD

by the group — a compilation of Graham Kendrick and other modern worship songs — to raise funds for a new centre for the 15th century Addington church.

Although the service was in part a celebration of marriage, this was Lent and so Mr Miles invited us in his sermon to contemplate the meaning of suffering. "Sometimes people speak of their faith being destroyed by tragedy, by accidental death, by severe handicap," he said. "They wonder how a God of love could do that to them." This was difficult to answer. "Sometimes such a faith needs to be destroyed in order that a true faith can be established," he said. But suffering gave the church a focus for mission. "A person who can approach suffering in a positive frame of mind, knowing God can bring good out of evil, finds it character forming," he said.

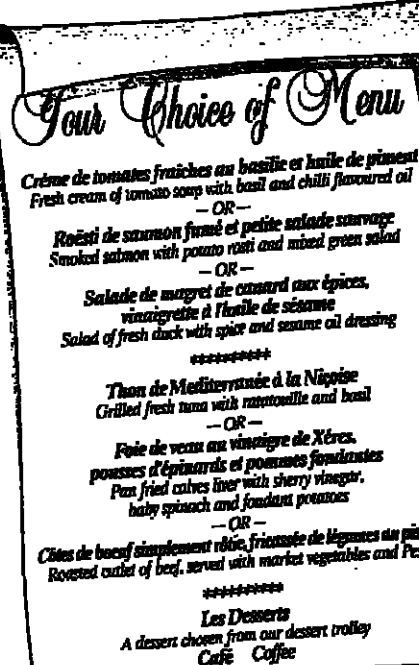
Immersed in the language and architecture of the past, it was a struggle to return from the narrow, rustic lanes of Trottscliffe to the reality of the A20 and the M26. I drove home, longing for the gentler sufferings of the Pilgrim's Way.

● St Peter and St Paul's Church, Trottscliffe, Kent (01732 842249)

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Condemned as a vandal or protected? What can be done with the little gentleman in black velvet who wreaks havoc with the lawn?

## Mountains out of molehills

Have you ever woken up in the morning to discover swellings? Nasty outbreaks, niggling scars everywhere, irritating and big enough to burst. When it happens, is there a cure?

Not to my knowledge. Sufferers learn to live with the affliction unaided by counselling or therapy. We just cope as best we can knowing that it can strike at any moment. The mornings are the worst: we retire the night before in a content frame of mind, feeling safe, only for dawn to reveal that the malady has not gone away. True, it can go into a blissful remission, but for sure it will be back. Damn it.

Or rather, damn them. Moles! They are everywhere: not only despoiling my lawn (about which I do not care too much) but the meadows, which do matter. Grass is all that horses and livestock have to eat in the summer, and every little upheaval that a mole leaves behind is one patch of grass less to be grazed. Imagine the uproar if there were some malevolent creature which could, without warning, appear in the middle of our food: a pointed nose suddenly springing out of your sandwich and

spoiling not only that one, but all the others for the rest of the year. Science would be all out for a remedy. But what has science given us to combat moles? Nothing at all. It has been left to folklore. I have been offered all manner of fanciful notions, like burying wine bottles so that the note formed when the wind blows across the mouth frightens the moles away. Then how do you mow the lawn? And how can you find enough wine bottles to plant the width of a decent meadow and still be able to walk in a straight line? Or am I missing the point? Is it the idea that you must drink yourself into such oblivion that the sight of molehills no longer inflames you?

As the bailiffs on the site of the Newbury bypass discovered, creatures who spend most of their life below ground are notoriously difficult to deal with because you cannot possibly have the slightest idea where they are. Rabbits are easier, because their burrows are

wide enough for a wriggling ferret to work its way along, or even a slender terrier. But the mole is cleverer than that and leaves hardly an opening to his den, just a defiant show of earth at the gate.

When you scan the shelves for a mole repellent, you find none. A good shop might stock 50 treatments for killing netles, but not moles. Only something called mole-smokes, and this is where my problem begins, because pests though they are I have always thought of them as fellow creatures and if I am to do battle with them, would rather it was fair and in the open air, as with mice and rats. To smoke

### DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

them to death seems a touch underhand, the more so when you read that the mole is a creature of miraculous talents.

My *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1908) — still my required bedtime reading — poses an interesting question. It says of the worm-eating mole: "Strange as it may appear, no earth is ever found in the stomach of a

mole. How then, does the mole swallow worms with no earth in them?" Since that was written, biological science has cloned a sheep, but not the mole-earth-tummy conundrum. It is quite comforting to feel some fundamental truths remain entirely inexplicable. Another is

where the mole gets its soil from: wherever a mole appears he throws up better soil than I have ever found in field or garden. Out of the most miserably lumpy clays he will throw forth, like lava from a volcano, a soil as fine as potting compost. What the silky little fellow has managed in moments with his little paws is more than I could achieve in a hour with a spade, fork and rake.

So perhaps we should all be kinder to moles. James Hogg, the famous Ettrick shepherd, put forward the largely unpopular opinion that: "The most unnatural of all persecutions that was ever raised in a country is that against the mole — that innocent and blessed little pioneer who enriches our pastures with the first top dressing, dug with great pains and labour from the fastest of the soil beneath."

Put that way, the appearance of the mole's carbuncles is less depressing.

Hogg was not alone. The editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, writing around the same time said: "We know of a worthy old gentleman... who reclaimed from waste his whole paternal estate and laid it in grass fields; he maintained that the moles were his labourers, adding to the depth of soil and fertility of the sward. Husbandmen indeed have long known how to avail themselves of this part of the labours of the mole; but then they have always held it necessary to destroy the labourer." I felt rather ashamed, reading that.

In this confrontational age it is necessary to have a position on every issue, so where should we stand on the gentleman in the black velvet coat? Saint or sinner? He can be condemned for his destructive habits, or sanctified for his tith-making talents.

I have almost talked myself round to the mole's side. You may wish to differ. I doubt I shall go as far as a mole sanctuary, but a mole farm is a possibility: newly dug soil to sell to gardeners, real mole-skin trousers, digging masterclasses for eco-warriors? The possibilities are limitless.

## Still alive, alive-oh — but only just

The cockle gatherers of Wales are fighting to save their precious cottage industry from modern methods

It is Sam on the north Gower coast. At Pengladd sands, grey and barely distinguishable from the sky, we wait for daybreak which signals the coming of the cockle gatherers. Some have arrived from further afield, already farming the sands.

Although an independent breed, gatherers are held captive by nature, following the ebbing tide in search of shellfish. Cockling is a way of life in this peninsula and leading the way is Selwyn's, a company fighting to preserve cottage industry under threat.

Selwyn's Pengladd Seafoods is a thriving family firm going back four generations, renowned throughout South Wales and named after Selwyn Jones. Today his son Brian and daughter-in-law Alyson run the successful shellfish processing business from a factory which sits on the windswept salt marshes of the north Gower. They carry on a tradition which has evolved since their great-grandmothers and their donkeys first set foot on the sand more than a century ago.

But now dangerous clouds loom overhead. The Dutch have taken over many of the cockle fisheries in Britain where they have introduced suction dredging, "an activity which would destroy our cockle population", according to Mrs Jones, who fears the effects of over-fishing. In Pengladd the dredger companies want to operate for six months of the year, enough for the cockles to be frozen and tinned for the export market. "But our market is a fresh one. To survive, we must gather year-round," Mrs Jones says.

In 1910, 250 women collected cockles from the Burry inlet; today only 40 licences are

issued to locals. Out of those, the Joneses retain seven. About a thousand people in Britain today make their living from cockles, according to the Shellfish Association of Great Britain. In 1995, 24,400 tons were gathered for sale, 80 per cent from the Wash, the



Brian and Alyson Jones

Thames and the Solway Firth (mechanically dredged) and 20 per cent from the Burry inlet (by hand). Individuals are licensed to take six hundredweight of cockles per day and patrolmen ensure quotas are not exceeded.

Gathering cockles by hand is arduous. Armed with a cram (rake) and riddle, gatherers choose a section of beach at low tide and scrape just beneath the sand. The cockles are scooped into the riddle, shaken so undersized ones fall through, swirled in a pool and bagged. "It takes two to three hours to collect our quota in the summer; longer in winter when the sand isn't as thick with cockles," Mr Jones says.

Cockles live for four to five years and spawn when a year old. Besides the Burry inlet on the western side of Carmarthen Bay, cockles are gathered principally in the inter-tidal flats of the Wash and Thames estuaries. They are at their best from June through to

December, although they are gathered throughout the year.

Cockles from the Gower peninsula were eaten during Roman times and valued throughout the centuries. Today they can be found far away in grand London restaurants such as Bibendum (in a seafood platter) or the Hyde Park Hotel (warm with garlic, white wine and herbs). Rick Stein, the television chef, uses them at his restaurant in Padstow, Cornwall, in a shellfish marmalade based on a recipe from Goa (not Gower).

Gathering cockles became the preserve of women who walked barefoot to Swansea market carrying loaded baskets on their heads. Women ruled the sands up until the mid-1940s: some were like Selwyn's mother, who provided the only income when their husbands died in the mines.

From Pengladd to the village of Llannorlais, a breeze blows over the marsh as retired ponies stroll across it. Llannorlais is where the tractors unload sacks of cockles on to a hissing conveyor belt on which they are washed. Shells are separated and the cockles fall into a double bath in which they are thoroughly cooked and rinsed. They come out deliciously sweet.

Fresh cockles end up in markets from Carmarthen to Billingsgate and the South Wales valleys. The excess is snatched up and canned by Spain and Portugal.

The pony and cart disappeared ten years ago, but two things remain unchanged: the shellfish are still collected by hand and cockling is banned on Sundays. To conserve stocks, the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee does not allow mechanical dredging.



Cockle-picking by hand on the North Gower coast this week: the advent of dredgers would put emphasis on tinned rather than fresh cockles

The Sunday edit offers the cockles a day of rest.

The reorganisation of local government since April 1996 has resulted in a lack of funds for the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee, which has policed the cockle beds and marine environment for more than 100 years. Without it, mechanical dredgers would sweep in overnight and the effects on the cockle beds would, according to the hand-pickers, be devastating. Local funding is needed by next month for the committee to survive. The Joneses are pinning their hopes on possible EU funds and on their supporters rallying round.

Selwyn Jones himself died last year but his words sum up the feelings on the Gower: "We have always moved with the times. Now they should help us to stay exactly as we are."

MANISHA GAMBHIR HARKINS

## Traditional food at risk

MANY OF our small, traditional food sources and industries are in danger of being lost forever, threatened as they are by dredgers, alien species, the lure of cheap food and bad husbandry practices, health scares, regulations from Brussels, and changing tastes.

With that loss of jobs, diversity and traditional food ways, we lose a sense of place, that feeling of knowing where you are by what you can eat. The prospect of cheap salmon led to large-scale salmon farming off the northern shores of Scotland, and this has posed serious threats to the traditional wild salmon and trout fishing grounds. The introduction of the signal crayfish from America, a large voracious species, has all but wiped out the native population, and with it the rural idyll of catching crayfish in chalk streams, while European legislation put paid to the tripe dressers of northwest England.



Stilton: forced to change

Almost every postbag brings letters about this. The veal and ham pie seems to be extinct, according to a Cheshire reader who says: "I hope it won't vanish to give European and Indian snacks more room; we need it to represent English yeoman kitchen history." A reader in Derbyshire wanted to know where to get the streaky bacon "which left wonderful fat in the breakfast pan for the mushrooms, tomatoes, fried eggs, fried bread, instead of the awful white mess we are left with these days".

We prefer cheap bacon to good bacon and put up with watery, tasteless, quick-frozen meat from factory-farmed pigs.

Stilton is no longer made with unpasteurised milk because of fears, in the winter of 1988-89, of listeriosis associated with soft and blue cheeses. Yet the listeriosis cases that winter were all associated with the Swiss pasteurised soft cheese, Vacherin du Mont d'Or. Among all our traditional cheesemakers of Lancashire and Cheshire, only two farms, Kirkham's in Lancashire and Appleby's in Cheshire make their cheese from unpasteurised milk, all the others having succumbed to pressure from their customers, the supermarkets, to pasteurise.

Cheddar, too, is, according to Randolph Hodgson of Neal's Yard "fast becoming an endangered species". Only ten farms still make Cheddar in the traditional way. As he says, it is not a matter of retaining traditional ways for the sake of it, but because these produce a better cheese, made slowly and matured slowly.

FRANCES BISSELL

## Listen for the sound of a long kiss

### FEATHER REPORT

IT IS always a cheering sight to see a greenfinch flying towards one. It is such a strong, confident flyer, and its rattling twitter as it approaches sounds very self-assured. At present, if it lands in a tree-top it may start making its loud spring call — a wheezing note, rather like a long sucking kiss. If it is nervous it will start its pebbly twitter again, and then it will be off with a flash of its lemon-yellow wings and its greenish-yellow rump.

However, sturdy and sure of themselves though they may seem, this is a dangerous time of year for greenfinches. They have been picking up the fallen seeds of fat hen, persicaria and burdock all the winter, but now supplies are running low, and few of the early spring flowers have yet turned to seed. There may be some surviving rosehips, and

perhaps a few new dandelion and groundsel seeds. But in general, food is hard to find.

So, during March and April bird lovers who put out peanuts should not slacken off. Peanuts will be extremely welcome to greenfinches, who nowadays are as at home in gardens as they are in fields.

Most of them have paired up by now, and one often sees the male darting through the branches after his mate. He is also starting to sing. His song is just an extension of his normal twitter — a full-bodied version of it, followed by a string of more melodious notes. It might be described as a "chip chip chip" followed by a "choo choo choo".

Greenfinches do not defend large territories in the way that chaffinches do. They chase other greenfinches away from a small area around the laurel bush or yew tree in which they will make their nest.

They build bulky nests of twigs and grass, lined with hairs, and like to place them in the fork of an evergreen, usually just out of reach of an inquisitive human. They will be laying their four or five eggs, which are a faint blue or green with brown blotches, at the end of April, so plant seeds



Greenfinches are busy looking for des res in the garden

will be abundant by the time the first brood hatches out.

The male feeds his mate while she is sitting, and both share in feeding the young, giving them a mixture of insects and seeds. The polygamous green young are packed tight in the nest by the time they are ready to fly — they always look

to me like a box of glacé fruits, if I climb up to look at them.

Like their close relatives, the goldfinches, they do not object to other members of their species nesting quite close by. They are sociable birds, and will often go off foraging in the summer with other greenfinches, just as they do in the

winter. In this way, if one bird spots a clump of weeds with ripe seeds showering from it, the whole party can benefit. After its first brood of young has fledged, the pair will usually have a couple more broods before summer is out, sometimes moving a long distance away each time. Well into September the trees are full of squealing young greenfinches.

For the moment, though, the males are starting to parade themselves round their territory with a curious butterfly-like flight, singing as they go.

In this flight they look quite different from their normal selves. They beat their wings hesitantly, then glide with all their feathers puffed up. As they flit in this manner over gardens and parks, frequently changing course, they are one of the most extraordinary spectacles of early spring.

DERWENT MAY

### ON THE SPOT: NORTH CORNISH COAST

#### Rural recommendations

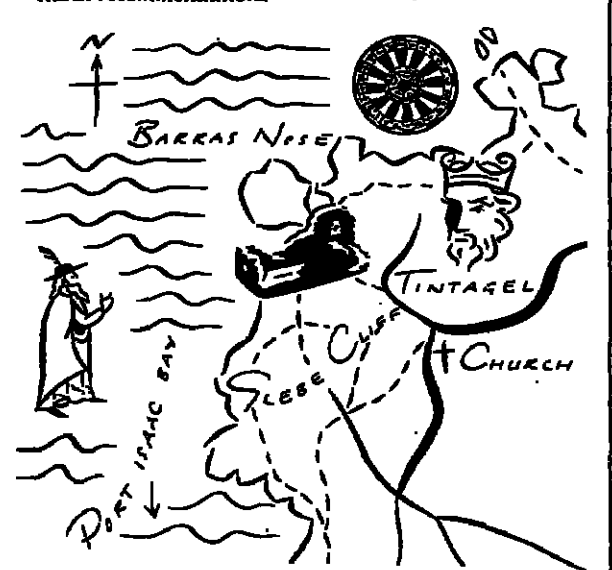
The place: Descent from Gbleb Cliff, Tintagel, North Cornwall.

The view: Tintagel church and Port Isaac Bay behind, the Island and Lower Ward of King Arthur's Castle, Merlin's Cave and Cove, Barras Nose and the King Arthur's Castle Hotel ahead.

The appeal: I holidayed in Tintagel every year as a boy, beachcombed Merlin's every morning before breakfast, and walked the cliffs every day. I brought my wife here on honeymoon.

Afficionados: Coastal path walkers, backpackers and tourists in season and me when it is wet.

Historical interest: Abounds, though it is partly mythical. King Arthur's Castle, a romantic and vestigial ruin, is really 13th century, and was built in the time of Earl Richard of Cornwall, Henry III's younger brother, who became King of the Romans. But Geoffrey of Monmouth could not have picked a better spot for King Uther Pendragon's night of passion with Igraine, wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, the tryst arranged by Merlin which resulted in Arthur's birth. Sadly when they



ward the sea and bear right toward King Arthur's Castle and Merlin's. Also nearby: Tintagel village is not wonderful but The Old Post Office, a 14th-century house owned by the National Trust, is a must as is King Arthur's Great Hall of Chivalry, creation of a custard magnate whose Order of the Round Table had a membership of 16,000.

ROBIN YOUNG

Illustration: Jane Spencer

SHOPAROUND  
ALSO  
APPEARS ON  
PAGE 14

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Ray Leonard surveys a polluted beach at Blackhall

## Sea change for the black coast

After decades of use as a tip for pit waste, the shores of County Durham are being returned to nature. Clare Stewart reports

While the attractions of County Durham's short coastline — its remarkable but-terflies, flowers and cliffs — often set the pulses racing, the blackened and heavily polluted beaches can also make the heart sink. But not, perhaps, for much longer.

Head east from Durham towards the North Sea and you come across signposts to collieries. You will not find any, though. Outside the port of Seaham and along the coast road to Peterlee and Hartlepool there are areas of bleak wasteland and new development sites. These, on the surface at least, are all that remain of six collieries that once dominated the coast, providing 11,000 jobs. The last pit, Easington, closed four years ago. Left behind are unemployment and an environmental challenge.

For more than a century parts of the coast were used as the cheapest and most convenient rubbish tip for mine waste, with as much as 2.5 million tonnes of spoil being

dumped in peak years. Overhead conveyors carried the waste from the pits and over the cliffs to be flung into the sea just off the foreshore, while convoys of lorries dumped large amounts of slurry from the coal washeries.

The beaches known for golden sands and seaside outings in the early 1900s have long since disappeared under 12ft-15ft of spoil in places, and the shoreline has been pushed further out to sea. The result is barren areas which proved more suitable for one of the *Allen* films than for building sandcastles. So, not surprisingly, the Durham coast does not get glowing write-ups in books on beautiful Britain, and many guides ignore the coast between Hartlepool and Sunderland, despite it being Britain's only stretch of magnesium limestone cliffs.

This limestone supports flower-rich grasslands of botanical interest and much of the coast is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are



In the 1890s, before pollution left its mark, the golden sands of County Durham were a favourite destination for daytrippers

also a number of dunes, dramatic steep-sided valleys of ancient and unspoiled woodland that run inland from the coast. The largest, Castle Eden Dene, is a nature reserve managed by English Nature.

The demise of the coal industry dealt a heavy blow to the region, but has also opened the way to environmental change after more than 40 years of battling to stop the damaging effects of tipping. In 1984, a Royal Commission trumpeted that the beaches were a national disgrace, while local pressure groups kept up a dogged campaign for change, prompting headlines about the "sands of grime" and the "Costa del Soiled".

Now, however, a £10 million project called Turning the Tide has started. This will tackle environ-

mental improvement along a 13-mile stretch of coast from Ryhope south to Crimdon. It will also link a number of conservation schemes already under way. The project is part of the East Durham Task Force, a regeneration initiative, and the participants include Durham County Council, Easington District Council, the Countryside Commission, English Nature and the National Trust, which owns nearly five miles of the coastline.

In January, Turning the Tide was awarded £4.5 million by

the Millennium Commission, which has given the project the financial spur and momentum to ensure that a large part of it will be completed by the year 2000.

Despite the pollution, the mines provided some benefits to the coast. The unsightly-ness of the pits meant that other forms of seaside development, such as caravan parks, were kept at bay, and the higher beach levels from the dumping of spoil provided some protection for the cliffs from sea erosion.

This summer work begins on the

monumental task of removing two shoreline spoil heaps of about 1.5 million tonnes at Easington and Horden. Unless removed, these heaps will continue to pollute the beaches and over time become unstable. Some of this spoil is going back to the Easington colliery site, which is to be landscaped, and where there are plans for a visitors' centre. At Horden, the spoil will return to the cliff-top where, with a limestone capping, it will be re-sown as grassland.

Removing all the spoil from the coastline would be costly and environmentally difficult. But there is one natural answer. "The sea can reduce the spoil by about a foot a year," says Ray Leonard, the project manager who is based with Durham County Council.

Cleaner seawater also helps, and investment by Northumbrian Water in better sewage treatment works is tackling the problem of beach outfall. Longer term, there remains the impact of mine waste on the seabed, where the effect on marine life is being studied.

Turning the Tide is not just concerned with the impact of coal mining on the seashore and marine environment. Much of the coastal strip is intensively farmed arable land, where the use of fertilisers has damaged the natural flora and fauna of the limestone grasslands along the cliffs. Farming has also contributed to cliff erosion, with land drains and run-off from the fields washing away soil.

The project aims to acquire as much of the coastal strip as possible and return it to accessible natural grassland, and to prevent SSSI areas being squeezed between natural cliff-face erosion and arable cultivation.

This reinstated grassland, says Mike Lowe, the countryside officer for Durham County Council, "will be one of the biggest habitat recreation schemes in the country".

Biodiversity is the guiding principle here, and the flower and grass seed being used has been harvested from the small surviving areas of unspoiled grassland, rather than using imported seeds.

Bloody cranesbill (*Geranium sanguineum*) is a feature of the limestone grasslands along with the rockrose, the main food supply for the Durham Argus, a species of butterfly unique to the county.

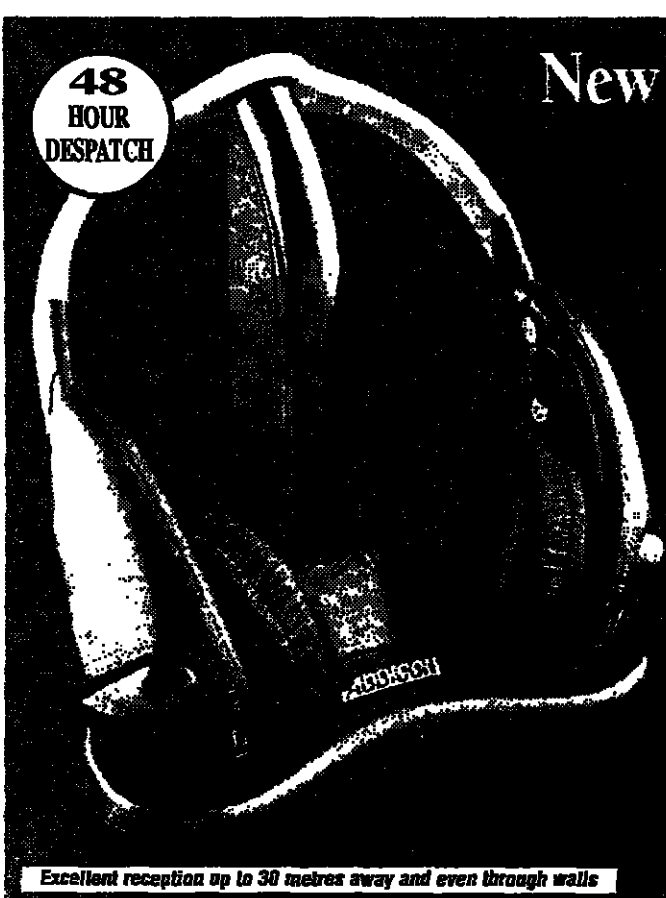
Several varieties of orchid, including the common spotted and fragrant orchid, can be found, and the reintroduction of the rare green-winged orchid, driven out by farming, is being considered.

Golden sands and wild orchids are not the sole criteria for success, however. Rekindling local pride is important, as is opening up the coast for wider enjoyment. Better paths and access routes are planned to allow exploration of the cliffs and beaches, along with improved public information about the dunes and other natural features. A cycle route through the area is planned which will link into the national Sustrans cycle network.

"Turning the Tide is not about 'Blackpool and deckchairs'," Mr Leonard says. It is about rediscovering the natural attraction of the coastline. A vast influx of visitors in cars is neither wanted nor will it be provided for, he adds.

As the area copes with the economic and social problems after the closure of the mines, the project is "about change and this community," Mr Leonard says. "It shows what can happen if people invest in this area."

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Old sights  
for the  
new beach  
invaders  
Tunisia - 18

# THE TIMES travel

Enthusiasts  
guide to  
a stylish  
pub crawl  
England - 20



## If it's good enough for Diana...

Finding a safe holiday destination free from the prying eyes of the paparazzi is no easy task for the world's most photographed woman, but she has found it in the Caribbean islands, says Anthony Holden

On the important subject of escaping the British winter, Diana, Princess of Wales has rather different criteria from the rest of us mere mortals. Apart from sun, sea and sand, and five-star luxury, the time-off priorities of the world's most famous woman are — unsurprisingly — privacy and security.

Since an unhappy experience in the Indian Ocean in 1993, when a break with two girlfriends on the island of Moyo was cut short by the nocturnal invasions of a wild pig, Diana has opted exclusively for the West Indies. She learnt to love the Caribbean in the late 1980s at the height of her marital problems, when she holidayed without her husband on the tiny island of Necker. Richard Branson's private fiefdom in the British Virgin Islands.

Fleet Street's royal "ratpack" twice checked into the jaunty nearby resort of Bitter End, on Virgin Gorda, as Diana and her sons enjoyed island house parties hosted by her mother, Frances Shand-Kydd, for all three of her daughters and their children. In those days, when Diana was still HRH, members of the royal protection squad also got to enjoy the expensive delights of Necker.

Since her separation from the Prince of Wales in 1992, Diana has felt freer to roam the idyllic chain of Caribbean islands — many of which remain her former mother-in-law's dominions — in search of her ideal destination. In all, she has taken eight West Indian holidays with or without her sons, depending on school terms.

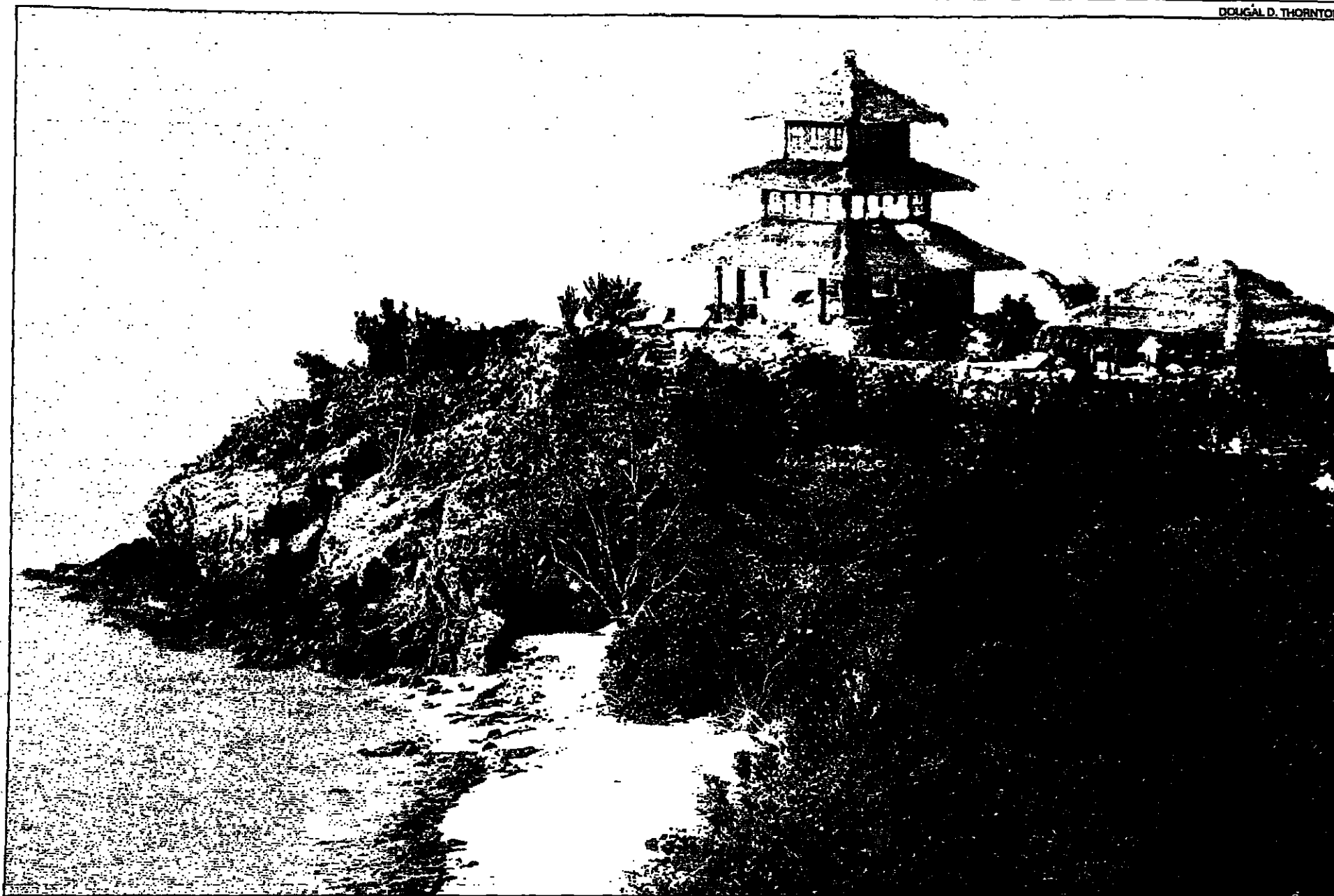
A series of protocol hiccups in 1993 highlighted the problems attending any holiday the Princess takes anywhere, before or since her divorce last year. Following a last-minute decision to take her sons on an end-of-year sunshine break, after they had spent Christmas without her at Sandringham, she faced a choice between three venues favoured by the Caribbean jet set.

The front-runner was Jamaica's top resort, Round Hill, and specifically Room 26 — the most alluring hotel suite in the West Indies, with its own chef and maid, four double-bedrooms, and a private swimming pool in the open-air sitting room.

This is where Paul McCartney takes his family for Christmas, but the Jamaican authorities could not countenance a visit from the Princess and the future King William without mounting an honour guard at the airport to bid them welcome. These days she goes on holiday precisely to get away from such formalities, so an advance party of Special Branch officers changed direction to check out Jumbay Bay, the super-exclusive island resort just off Antigua.

They soon agreed with the management that the festive season — the busiest time of the Caribbean year, when the place is packed to overflowing — would not be ideal timing for a royal visit, so instead she went to Nevis. Private villas clearly make sense for Diana if privacy can be guaranteed.

The near-impossibility of this was demonstrated last summer when photographers



Romantic hideaway: one of the Balinese-style villas on Necker, in the British Virgin Islands, owned by Richard Branson. A staff of 22 is included in the price, from £6,700 a day

invaded the grounds of the French villa she shared for a week with her fellow royal divorcee the Duchess of York, Princess Margaret. Diana's next-door neighbour in Kensington Palace, also loves the West Indies, spending several weeks a year at her private villa on the Windward island of Mustique. Reluctant to capitalise on her royal relations, Diana opted instead for a week at the luxury villa of a friend, the photographer Patrick Demarchelier, on the select but pricey Leeward island of St Barthelemy — known to its habitués as St Barth's and to others as Manhattan-sur-mer.

But fame trapped her in Demarchelier's mountain retreat, with tantalising, long-distance views of dreamy beaches impossible for her to visit. Not until the end of 1995 did Diana finally find the super-resort of her dreams, which answered all her needs: the small but ultra-chic K Club on the tiny Antilles island of Barbuda, where the few other guests are almost as famous as herself.

After a winter break there with her girl Friday, Victoria Mendham, Diana returned to the K Club with her sons for Easter 1996, and then again with Mendham for last Christmas and new year. The previous week I had been there

myself at the end of a long trail checking out Diana's Caribbean choices for Times readers.

### BARBUDA

IT IS NOT hard to see why the K Club, on the otherwise empty island of Barbuda, has become Diana's favourite Caribbean hideaway. As part of the service, free of charge, they mobilise the Antiguan army to seal off both ends of the private 1.5-mile beach for her, and a coastguard vessel to keep the paparazzi at bay. Amid celebrity guests too super-cool to stare, Diana can enjoy her morning run along the water's edge, followed by a strenuous exercise session, in as much privacy as she can find anywhere in the world.

The K Club, 40 beachfront villas set in a 230-acre private estate, is as near to Caribbean perfection as it gets, living up to its boast to treat every guest as "the most pampered Robinson Crusoe in the world". Even its private plane, which picks you up in Antigua for the 20-minute hop to Barbuda, is liveried in the distinctive turquoise-and-white decor chosen to mirror the sea and sand by Krizia, the Italian fashion designer who opened the resort in 1989.

The K Club's away-from-it-all policy rises above news-papers or television but its spacious and airy Club House has a games room and library with bestsellers in four languages, and a well-stocked bar beside the sea water pool and Jacuzzi. Its array of blue-



The Princess on the Leeward island of St Barthelemy

and-white sofas double as a "conversation area" — if the celebrity guests unbend enough to speak to each other. "The Princess and her sons can sit right here without anyone bothering them," Michael Neutzelings, the Dutch manager, told me over a banana daiquiri.

Like any resident film star, they can also cut unmolested in the club's elegant beachfront restaurant, serving superb haute cuisine "based on Mediterranean traditions", or in the privacy of their two-bedroom villa. But they cannot send postcards home: the K Club is far too refined to offer such kitsch tourist fare.

The K Club's spacious villas, cooled by trade winds as much as air-conditioning, were designed by the Italian architect Gianni Giamondi, a friend of Krizia who is responsible for many resort hotels on Sardinia's Costa Smeralda. The club also has a nine-hole golf course, two floodlit tennis courts and all the water sports but, in the unlikely event that guests want to go out looking for action, there are pheasants, deer, wild boar, even buffaloes to hunt in the island's 70 square mile swampy interior. The club lays on excursions to the Grand Lagoon, a wildlife sanctuary boasting the ex-

tremely rare frigate bird. Diana, who may take her sons back to the K Club this Easter, after they have been on an African safari with their father, is unlikely to find a safer haven.

### ANTIGUA

JUMBY BAY Island is the offshore Antiguan resort so exclusive that it turned Diana away because of all the helicopters, photographers and other riff-raff she would inevitably trail in her wake. Or so the story goes.

In fact, as explained above, the timing was not right for a visit which William Anderson, the resort's American manager, naturally says he would welcome. In 1993, however, the opportunity for some publicity was seized by a minority of the mega-rich owners of private villas on the island, as they embarked on a long-running legal dispute with its owners.

Apart from Lord Sainsbury, the novelist Ken Follet and the reclusive British businessman Roland Franklin and Peter Swann, Jumbay Bay residents include the British-born American television star Rob Leach, host of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. He said: "We voted no to Princess Di and decided we didn't want the helicopters and the paparazzi."

The 300-acre island off the northeast coast of Antigua, accessible only by its own private ferry, is so secure that its rooms have no keys, only a

safe in which to lock away all the cash you will not be needing during your stay. Prices, though steep, are all-inclusive, covering most facilities (tennis, water sports), drinks and meals, including the very acceptable house wines from the New York winery of John and Harry Mariani, the island's owners.

The Mariani brothers bought what was then Long Island in 1986, renamed it Jumbay Bay (in Antiguan folklore, a *jumbie* is a friendly native spirit) and set out to turn it into one of the most exclusive clubs on earth. The villas are dotted all over the island. Bicycles are provided free and golf buggies are

available for hire, but visitors have to negotiate the flocks of wild sheep.

Aeroplanes taking off from nearby Antigua airport are the only noisy clouds on the perfect holiday horizon. The rooms have ceiling fans, bars and private patios — but no keys, telephones, televisions, radios or clocks.

### NEVIS

SITUATED on the island of Nevis, Montpelier sits 800 feet up the side of a volcano. The historic sugar plantation house, where Horatio Nelson married Frances Nisbet in 1787, is far too English to boast about its unexpected visit from Diana and her sons, plus a dozen security and other staff, who cheerfully bounced down to the beach every day in the back of the hotel's flatbed truck.

Picture a British country house weekend party in the West Indian sun and you get a flavour of the lifestyle hosted by Montpelier's eccentric English owner, James Milnes Gaskell, and his wife Celia. After peaceful days, when most guests forsake the pool for picnic lunches half an hour away at a private three-acre stretch of Pinney's Beach, the evenings begin with a cocktail party at 7.45pm, followed by dinners at which guests are encouraged to mingle.

Mr Milnes Gaskell was educated at Eton and Cambridge and bought this 370-acre plot in 1963 as a virtual ruin. Four years later, in June 1967, he had just finished building his hotel when the government put him in jail for siding with the Opposition over independence from Britain. After 42 days in St Kitts prison (not too bad, actually), he was deported. For 13 years he hired locals to run the hotel before he was allowed to return after a change of government in 1980.

Most guests enjoy squeezing the rest of his colourful life story out of their host during their stay. If you enjoy the company of strangers and don't long to be right on the beach, Montpelier will make a welcome change from all those American-style resort hotels — exemplified by the huge Four Seasons nearby.

### NECKER

THIS private 75-acre paradise in the British Virgin Islands, owned by Richard Branson, sends its speedboat to collect guests from the nearby airport at Beef Island, Tortola. There is accommodation for groups of

Continued on page 17

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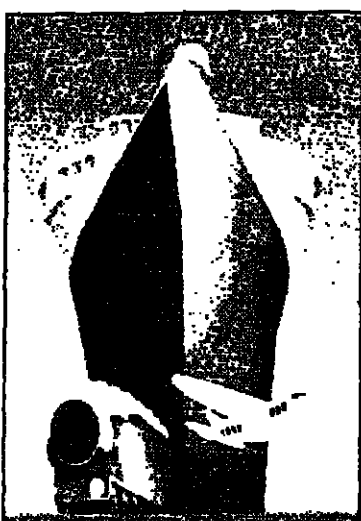
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# Royal approval

Continued from page 15  
20-24 between the ten bedrooms in the main house and two separate, Balinese-style villas, Bali Hi and Bali Lo, with free run of their own private island for as long as they can afford it — which may not be very long. Necker costs £10,000 a day — divisible among as many guests as can get on with each other for a week or more. A New York broker recently took the place for ten days for £100,000 — just for himself, his wife and their baby. Larger groups are the norm.

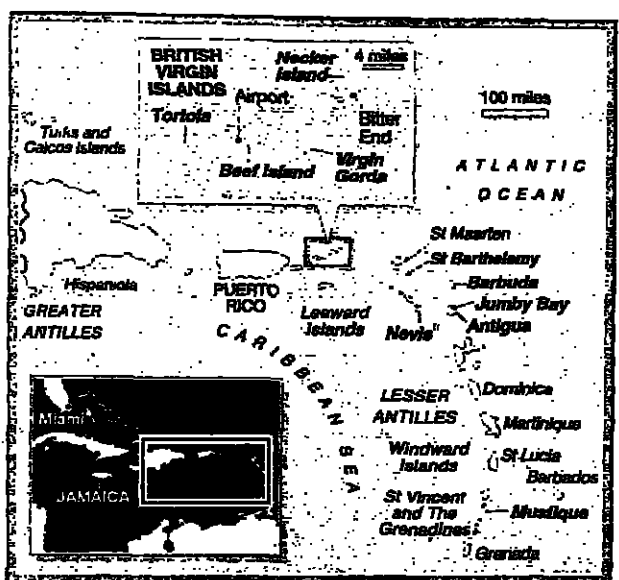
Necker is run for Branson by Mark and Joanne Netherwood, a genial young Australian husband-and-wife team, and would be the ideal place to take all your friends if you won the lottery.

Beside the sleekly furnished main house, which has a full-size snooker table and state-of-the-art hi-fi system, lies a sizeable pool commanding stunning views

across the sea to neighbouring islands. There are breakfast areas, sunset seats, a gym, island walks and endless nooks and crannies, as well as three different beaches, one with tennis courts and barbecue area. But meals — included in the price with as much as you can drink — are strictly communal.

Those who share Branson's taste for madcap adventure can parasail behind a speedboat or water-ski behind a helicopter. There are even plans for a "monkey run" so visitors can abseil from house to beach. Branson's own spacious master bedroom, with its private rooftop terrace, should suit the group leader as well as it did Diana, for whom the island proved the perfect escape from prying lenses. Necker is the ultimate bolt-hole for those with money to burn.

● The author was a guest of Caribbean Connection.



## CARIBBEAN FACT FILE

■ British Airways (0345 222111) flies to Antigua from E71; as does BWIA (0181-577 1100) from E752.

■ Necker Island can only be booked direct, as below. Package deals at all the others, including return flights from the UK, are available from Caribbean Connection (01244 341131) and Elegant Resorts (01244 897999). Prices vary according to season. K Club: from £3,206 to £4,449 per person, seven nights full-board in cottage room. Jumbay Bay: £2,358 to £4,448 per person, seven nights full board in a deluxe junior suite. Montpelier: £1,058 to £1,960 per person, seven nights bed and breakfast only in a premier room.

### BARBUDA

Address: K Club, Barbuda. Antigua, Windward Islands (001 268 460 0900).

Twelve-minute, seven-mile transfer by courtesy bus from Barbuda's Codrington airstrip (20-minute flight from Antigua £13 each way by hotel's private jet or £17 each way by scheduled LIAT flight); 28 spacious, air-conditioned cottage rooms with large shower/bathroom, seafront terrace with bar, patio dining area and private beach frontage; 12 garden villas and luxury suites also available at higher prices. Daily rates for room in single or double cottage, based on two people sharing: £1,100 (December 16-April 14); £600 (April 15-May 31); £500 (June 1-August 31). Closed September 1-November 14. Reopens (November 15-December 15). Prices do not include government tax of 8.5 per cent, and 10 per cent service charge. Antigua departure tax is £8 per person. Prices include: all meals (but not drinks), room service, picnic service, tennis (floodlit), snorkelling, windsurfing, sailing boats, TV and video room, K Club assistance at Antigua airport.

Available at extra cost: deep-sea fishing, reef and bone fishing, water-skiing, bird watching, golf, massage, hairdresser. All major credit cards accepted. Dress code: "Elegantly casual" (jackets and ties not required). Children under 12 not accepted.

### ANTIGUA

Address: Jumbay Bay Island, PO Box 243, St John's, Antigua (001 268 462 6000). Three miles (20 minutes by courtesy bus and ferry) from V.C. Bird airport, Antigua, a nine-hour BA direct flight from London. All-inclusive daily rates: Luxury villa (two-three bedrooms, price per room for two guests) £1,100 (December 20-January 3); £1,050 (January 4-February 1); £1,100 (February 2-23); £880 (April 6-May 24) and November 2-December 18, £800 (May 25-November 1). Deluxe junior suite: £800 (20 Dec-3 Jan, 2-28 Feb), £700 (4 Jan-1 Feb), £566 (6 April-24 May, 2 Nov-18 Dec), £440 (25 May-1 Nov). Prices do not include government tax of 8.5 per cent and service charge of 10 per cent. Departure tax: £8 per person. Prices include: accommodation, all meals including unlimited house wine, cocktails, launch and airport taxi, postage, American newspapers, use of tennis courts, snorkelling gear, sailing boats, sailboards, fitness centre, bicycle and croquet.

Available at extra cost: chartered sailing, deep-sea fishing, golf, resident tennis pro, scuba diving and instruction, water-skiing, massage, laundry, sightseeing/shopping excursions to Antigua (including the casino). All major credit cards accepted. Dress code: "elegant casual" (long trousers and shirts with collars for men in the evenings). October-May: no children under eight.

### NEVIS

Address: Montpelier Plantation, PO Box 474, Nevis, Windward Islands (001 869 469 3462).

Twelve miles (30 minutes by taxi costing £13) from Nevis airport, accessible by 30-minute LIAT flight from Antigua for £35 each way. Sixteen rooms (nine with king-size bed, eight with two doubles, one family suite). Daily rates for double room, bed & breakfast only: £187 (December 15-April 15), £120 (April 16-December 14). Lunch, dinner and drinks extra. Prices do not include government tax of 7 per cent and service charge of 10 per cent. Nevis departure tax: £7 per person.



Pinney's Beach on Nevis, where Diana, Princess of Wales arrived unexpectedly to spend a holiday

Prices include: bed and breakfast, afternoon tea, use of private beach (25 minutes away by courtesy bus), tennis courts, snorkelling gear. Available at extra cost: golf (at nearby Four Seasons Resort), tennis lessons, deep-sea fishing, scuba diving and other watersports. Credit cards accepted. Dress code: "casual chic to informal" (long trousers and shirts with collars for men in the evenings). Children over eight welcome.

### NECKER

Address: PO Box 1091, The Valley, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands (809 494 2757). UK bookings via Virgin Ultimate, 120 Campden Hill Road,

London W8 7AR (0171-727-8000). Half-hour transfer by private launch from Tortola airport, accessible by 90-minute flight from Antigua cost £108 return. Helicopter transfer from St Thomas (US Virgin Islands) available at extra charge. Ten double rooms in main house, plus two in separate villas. Daily rates for entire island, including transfer and all rooms all meals and drinks, staff of 22, use of pool, tennis courts and gym. Sunfish and sailing dinghies, water-skiing and snorkel equipment, for 20-24 guests, \$16,000 per day; for 15-19 guests, \$15,000 per day; for eight to 14 guests, \$13,000; for one to seven guests, \$11,000. Price includes a boat to visit other islands, laundry and business facilities, seven per cent local

tax. Available at extra cost: travel arrangements to and from UK, scuba diving and instruction, deep-sea fishing, yacht charter, secretarial assistance. A 25 per cent service charge is payable on departure. Supplement charged during Christmas and Easter. No dress code. Children welcome.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *The Traveller's Tree*, by Patrick Leigh Fermor (Penguin, £7.99), *Driving Guide to the Eastern Caribbean*, by Martha Watkins Gilkes (Macmillan, £10.95), *Cruising Around the Caribbean* (Thomas Cook, £15.99), *The Northeastern Caribbean*, by James Henderson (Cadogan, £9.99).

# Happy as a sandboy

The island of Aruba is one of the best-kept secrets in the Caribbean

The car number plates are a cheerful red and carry the slogan *Aruba: One Happy Island*. It's naïf, but remarkably close to being true. This was once a deserted patch of rock rising from the Caribbean, 15 miles off the coast of Venezuela, covered in cacti and visited only by the occasional pirate. Now it has miles of palm-fringed beaches, breakers and white sand, dream hotels and restaurants. The climate is warm, about 82 degrees all year round, with cooling trade winds, and it lies outside the hurricane belt. The perfect spot for a romantic interlude in the West Indies — so why have we never heard of Aruba?

Mostly because it is a former Dutch colony, not a British one. Holland seized Aruba in 1636 and, apart from a brief occupation in the Napoleonic Wars, it has been Dutch ever since. It has be-

come one of the most attractive islands in the Caribbean, but its visitors are from the United States, Latin America and the Netherlands. Almost no one goes there from Britain and we are definitely missing out.

The island is small, 19 miles by six. Apart from the beaches and the climate, its magic lies in its people. They are descended from the Arawak Indians, Dutch or Spanish settlers and negroes from other islands (there was no slavery on Aruba), and are warmly welcoming. Apart from one oil refinery, Aruba lives by tourism, but there is more to it than that; as Arubans smile in the sunlight, they seem genuinely eager to share their good fortune.

What they have to share is a tropical paradise and a legacy of Dutch rule that has left them a standard of living not far behind Western Europe. There is no ex-colonial resent-



Dutch-style buildings in Oranjestad, the main town

ment; over steins of Heineken. Holland is spoken of with misty-eyed affection.

The Dutch have bequeathed good schools, an excellent health service, modern roads and an island of manicured neatness straight out of the polders. Everyone speaks English, as well as Dutch, Spanish and the local Papi-

mento. There may be only 51,000 Arubans, but they constitute an autonomous province within the Netherlands — amazed and amused that they have been given their own parliament, flag and national anthem. The government sends its young people to university in America or Holland, the economy is buoyant, with no shady towns and minimal crime.

International hotels are concentrated along the north-west coast: a luxurious new 400-room Marriott, Holiday Inn, Hyatt and so on. Smaller locally-owned hotels are of equally high standard and perhaps more friendly. A good example is the Bucuti Beach, owned and managed by Ewald Biemans and his wife Susan, right on the shore with 63 well-appointed rooms, all with an ocean view. There are also guest houses, villas and apartments.

Eating out is varied and good value. At Brisas del Mar, Lucia Rasminj offers lobster, baby shark and a kaleidoscope of other seafood in a waterside

fishing shed; the Ellis family's Papiamento restaurant has an international menu, with tables around the swimming pool in the garden of a colonial mansion that is also their home. Snack meals are inexpensive, dinner under the stars in an idyllic setting — of which there are many — from £20 a head.

You can hire the gear for scuba diving, windsurfing and most other watersports; water-skiing is available and a submarine called Atlantis runs underwater tours. Apart from renting a jeep or mountain bike to explore the island, there is riding and golf. As well as numerous bars and nightclubs, Aruba has 11 casinos with roulette, blackjack and rows of one-armed bandits, pulled for hours by gum-chewing Mid-Westerners with glazed eyes.

But there is no point going unless you are looking for total hedonism in a place that pretends, quite successfully, that all the problems in the world have evaporated. "Ours is a happy paper," said the

editor of *Aruba Today*. "We don't print any bad news." Live like an Aruban — relax in the sun, eat and drink well, make love within sound of Caribbean breakers. Forget sightseeing.

Despite 300 years of Dutch occupation, there is little sign of the past: some delicate wood-carving in the Church of St Anna, one windmill and a few Amsterdam-style gabled houses in the main town, Oranjestad. The rusty masts of the single German freighter sunk in the Second World War have become a major attraction for boat trips.

So few British visitors go that you cannot fly direct. But there are regular KLM flights from Amsterdam, with connections from Heathrow and 13 other UK airports, including Bristol, Edinburgh and Manchester.

The best starting point for information is the Aruba Tourism Authority. The nearest office is in The Hague (but the staff speak English).

MICHAEL HARTLAND  
● The author was a guest of KLM and Journey Latin America.

## ARUBA FACT FILE

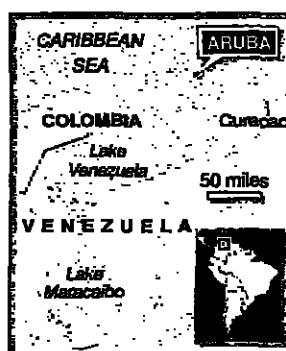
■ KLM flies from Heathrow and 13 regional airports via Amsterdam. Return flights, from £439, and accommodation can be booked through Journey Latin America, 14-16 Devonshire Road, London W4 2HD (081-747 3106).

■ Other companies include: North American Travel, 241 Kensington High Street, London W8 6SA (0171-938 3737). The Travel Design Company, 51 High Street, Reigate, RH2 9RT (01737 22250).

■ Reservations for the Aruba Marriott Resort can be made through Marriott worldwide (0800 221222; rooms from £130 a day. Rooms at the Bucuti Beach Resort (00 29 783100) cost from £95 a day.

■ Details of guest houses and apartments from the Aruba Tourism Authority in The Hague (00 370 356 6220).

■ Reading: *A Short History of the West Indies* by J.H. Parry (Macmillan, £7.95) *Travels with My Trombone* by Henry Shukman (Flamingo, £6.99), *Caribbean Fielding Guide* (£13.95).



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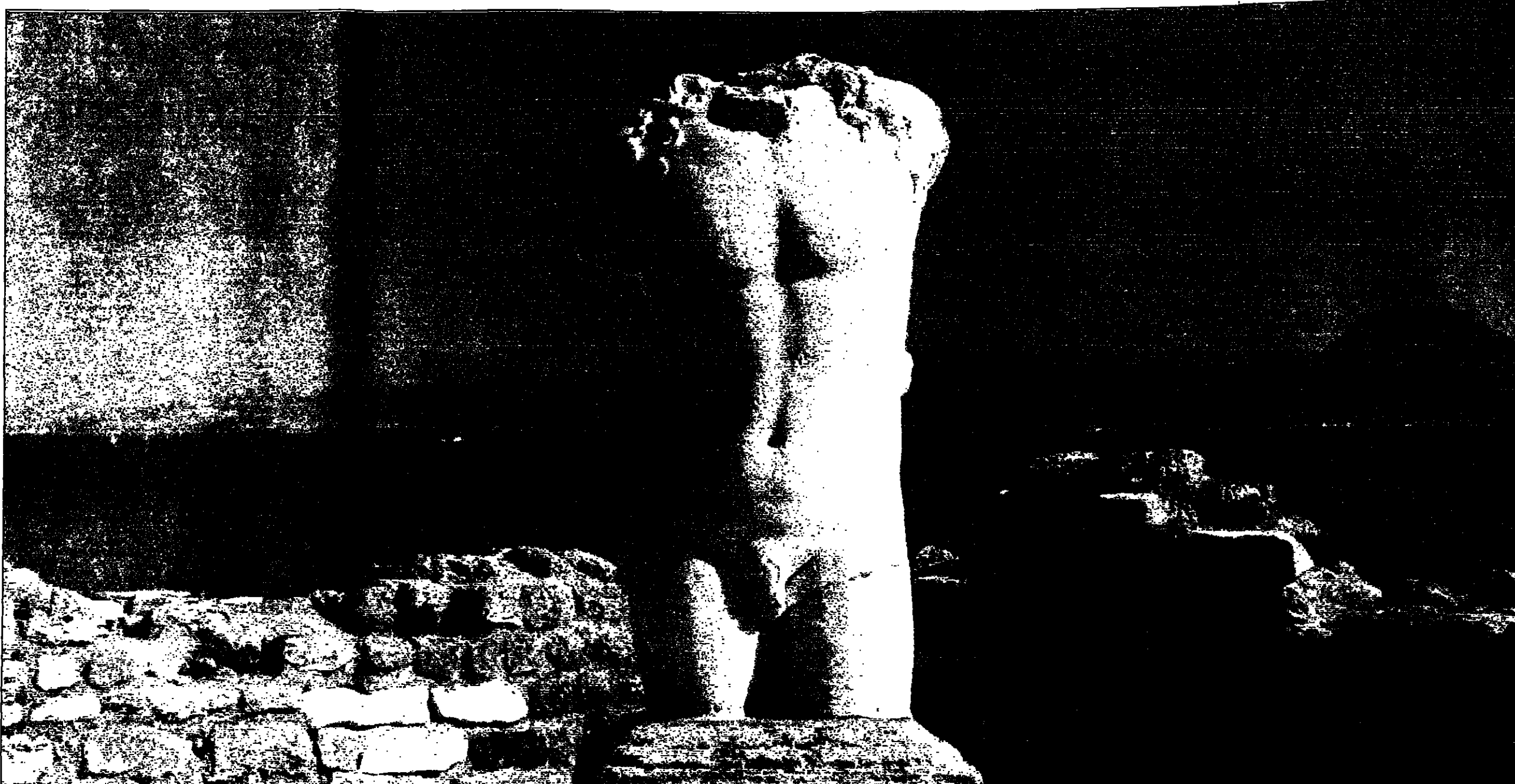
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# Tunisia: The views, mosques and forts of past invaders are extravagant – but you can get a good meal for £2

GERARD CHAMPLONG



The ruins of Carthage beside the Mediterranean are a popular stop on the main tourist trail in Tunisia, complementing the Roman amphitheatre at El Jem, the Great Mosque at Kairouan and the once formidable fortress of Mahdia

With its reliable sunshine, white sandy beaches, and bargain-basement prices, Tunisia is one of the most promising holiday spots in the Mediterranean, combining a touch of North African exotic with French sophistication.

Although most of the tourist hotels are at Monastir, or along the beach towards Hammamet, anyone staying on this stretch of coast should visit the ancient city of Sousse. Its natural harbour and central position, have attracted, over the centuries, Romans, Byzantines, Vandals and Arabs. Today, the old medina, on the hillside above the port,

is still surrounded by a sturdy stone wall and battlements, and the skyline is a jumble of minarets and towers. Yet the pavement opposite the Place Farhat Hached is lined with cafés and restaurants, and the atmosphere is relaxed and sophisticated. It could easily be Marseille.

Here, wealthy Tunisians and tourists sip espressos, smoke cigarettes and watch the world go by – including the trains that trundle through the middle of town.

Inside the old medina is the Great Mosque, founded in the 9th century, and beyond are the narrow alleyways and lanes of the bazaar: figs and spices, leather and clothes, jewellery and watches, souvenirs and perfumes entice the senses. Butchers' stalls display a cow's head with a blade of grass hanging out of its mouth, like James Dean with a cigarette. Yet what makes Sousse special are the numer-

ous stone steps that rise steeply from the port. The panorama from the top is stunning, encompassing the medina, the port and the sparkling Mediterranean.

In the top corner of the medina is the kasbah, which grew up around the huge Khalef Tower. Today, this former fort houses the city museum (entry is via Boulevard Marechal Tito). Exhibits include Roman statues and superb mosaics illustrating daily life and the local animals and fish. Like many of the archaeological sites in Tunisia, Sousse museum has the bonus of a pleasant, leafy courtyard and a large, shady, relaxing tea garden.

Beyond Sousse, one of the most stunning sights is the huge, well-preserved 2nd-century amphitheatre at El Jem, which can be reached by bus, louage (shared taxi) or train. The 30,000-seat amphitheatre dominates the town. Inside,

the site is a maze of archways and passages, balconies and seats, buttresses and chambers. But it's hard to envisage the gory Roman spectacles that were held here – animals pitted against men, Christians slaughtered.

A short journey from El Jem is Mahdia, a fishing town built on a peninsula on the Sackel coast. In the 10th century, Mahdia was the capital of the Fatimids, who ruled Tunisia and later Egypt. A huge wall was built across the headland and the only entrance was through a massive stone gate, and then a long, dark passage.

The Spanish destroyed the walls of Mahdia in 1554, but you can still enter the old town through a 16th-century reconstruction of the gateway and get some idea of how intimidating it must have been.

Inside, is the old medina with stone slab pavements, a few small mosques and numerous weaving workshops.

The centre of the medina is the Place du Caire, a cool, leafy square where old men sit drinking tea and smoking water pipes. Beyond is the Great Mosque and, further on, the hilltop fort.

Near the fort, excavations of ancient buildings are being carried out. However, the fort itself is only worth a visit for the view from its battlements. Immediately below are the narrow streets of the old town, but stretching into the distance an array of tourist hotels spreads out along the coastline in the direction of Monastir.

El Jem and Mahdia can be visited easily on the same day, but one other "must" trip from Sousse requires at least a full day to do it justice. About an hour's drive from Sousse is Kairouan, the holy city of Tunisia and fourth in Islam (after Mecca, Medina and

Jerusalem). The city was founded by Oqba Ibn Nafi in AD 670 and became the capital of the Aghlabids, the Arab rulers of Tunisia. It was once said that seven visits here were worth one to Mecca and, up until late last century, Christians could obtain entry only with an official permit.

Here, few concessions are made to tourists, and the character is unmistakably old and venerable, with several impressive gateways still standing. Most tourists arrive at the Place des Martyrs, near the Bab ech Chouhada gate. There is a large square here with several outdoor cafes.

Near the mosque ticket office are the Aghlabid Pools, built in the 9th century in the hope that they would produce humidity and reduce the summer heat. The plan backfired because the pools became a breeding ground for mosquitoes which spread malaria. Of the many places to visit

here, the best is the Barber Mosque, a short distance along the Avenue de la République. This is an exquisite place with wonderful mosaics of coloured tiles, stucco carved ceilings, decorative lamps, archways, cool courtyards and carpet-floored chambers. Abd Zama el Belaoui, one of the companions of the Prophet, is buried here, and the wealth of carpets is explained by the tradition that the young girls of the city present the first carpet they make to the mosque.

At the opposite end of the medina, through a maze of alleyways, is the Great Mosque, a large and powerful structure, surprisingly simple and bare after the Barber Mosque. It is worth visiting, if only to see the white and blue-washed houses along the way, and the extravagant doorways with their carved lintels and ornate wooden doors. The louvred shutters of the upper

storeys indicate the French influence.

The Great Mosque was built mostly in AD 836. Inside, a huge open courtyard and a large prayer which is a forest of columns and candelabra. Local tradition says that anybody who counts them all will turn blind.

Back near the Bab ech Chouhada is the ornate Chariati Mosque and the Bir Barouta, which, though it looks like a mosque, is a well. At the top of a rickety flight of stairs a camel tramps endlessly round, drawing up holy water. It's said that those who drink the water will one day return to Kairouan – but diarrhoea would seem a much more likely result.

Further from Sousse, but worth the journey, are the caves and ruins of Cap Bon peninsula, the fantastic Roman sites near Le Kef, and the ancient ruins of Carthage, which spread among the modern villas north of Tunis. But before leaving Sousse, be sure to walk through the narrow stone door of the Ribat, a 9th-century fortified monastery, and climb to the top of the tower for a final view of the city. Below is the courtyard of the Great Mosque, and the fortified city wall. Beyond, ships lie tied up in port – and, once again, the beaches of the Med beckon.

RICHARD MOVERLEY

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**TUNISIA FACT BOX**

- Getting there: A return flight from London to Tunis with Air France (0181-742 6600) via Paris costs from £192, plus tax. Alitalia (0171-602 7111) via Rome from £179, plus tax. The nearest airport to Sousse is at Monastir.
- Airtours (01706 240033) offers seven-day packages to Tunisia in April from £159. Panorama Holidays (01273 206531) offers a seven-night stay at Les Citronniers Hotel in Hammamet for £149. In June, Wignmore Holidays (0171-486 4425) offers a week's half-board at the three-star Marhaba Hotel in Sousse from £329.
- Getting around: Within Tunisia, louages (shared taxis) are the quickest and most convenient form of transport. The train is cheap and comfortable but slow and infrequent: Sousse to Mahdia takes 90 minutes and costs about £3. The bus to Kairouan takes 90 minutes and costs about £2. Try to find a seat on the shady side.
- What to eat and drink: One of the pleasures of a trip to Tunisia is the opportunity to sample French cuisine at a fraction of the usual price. Sousse is well-known for its seafood. Tunisian dishes worth trying include the thick chorba soups, couscous, the local semolina dish; merguez, a spicy sausage, and shawarma kebabs. The local wine is excellent.
- Prices: Even in the centre of Tunis a good meal costs under £2 and a night's stay at large colonial-style hotels (such as the Claridge in Sousse) is about £5 per person.
- Where to stay: Hotels cost from £10 per room at the Emira, 52 rue de France (22 63 25); Claridge, 10 Avenue Bourguiba (22 47 59). From £30 per room at Nour Justina, Avenue Hedi Chaker (22 68 66); Marhaba Club, Bld 7 Novembre (24 21 70).
- Reading: *Tunisia, The Rough Guide* (£10.99); *Rome in Africa*, by Susan Raven (Routledge, £14.99).

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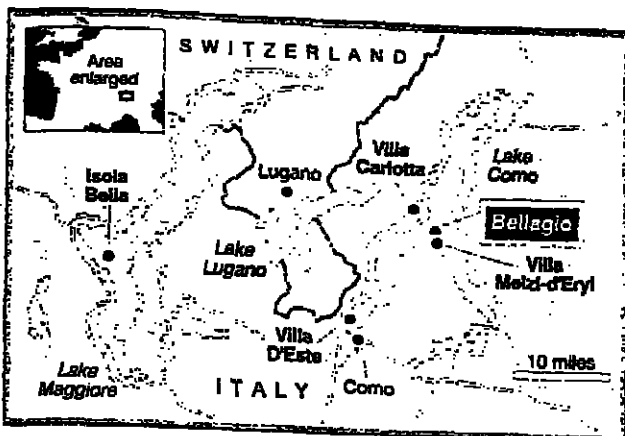
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## Italy: From the peaceful lakes of Como and Maggiore to the volcanic ruins and islands around Naples



## One more cornetto – after the garden

Isola Bella is a pleasure galley of a garden. Its stone terrace bows out through the cool, blue water of Lake Maggiore carrying a revel of gods, goddesses and unicorns. Bishop Burnet, visiting the island in 1684, wrote that it was "worthy of fairies, who have transported here a portion of the ancient gardens of Hesperides". I had hoped it would have a kind of Disney appeal for my children, aged five and six. White peacocks strutted past terracotta pots spilling over with pomegranates but the children had eyes only for some mangey kittens.

It was the 17th-century Villa Carlotta on Lake Como which struck a note for the children, and there were pleas to return there, despite the ice-cream, which was "disgusting".

This end of Lake Como, one of the deepest lakes in Europe at 410m, with its rich soil and abundant fishing, has attracted settlements since the Bronze Age. The Plinys, elder and younger, had a villa here, the Comodia, and today the lake edges are dotted with stately villas.

My heart was stolen by the steep, southerly gardens at Villa Carlotta, although it was August and so there was not a flower to be seen on the 150 varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas. But the long citrus tunnel to the front of the house burgeoned, the beeches wept copiously and the tulip trees, oaks, cork, camphor and myrrh trees were huge, magnificent specimens.

The children were mesmerised by Adamo Tadolini's (or school of) *Eros and Psyche*, whose delicate pure white marble forms came alive against the pale blue interior, and Francesco Hayer's romantic *Juliet's Last Kiss*. "Yuk, he kissed her," was the response.

Our holiday was on the basis that the children would get lots of swimming but only one ice-cream a day, and I would get gardens. We stayed in Bellagio at the Belvedere, a family-run hotel on a spur jutting scenically out into the fork of Lake Como. I could have asked for no better. Even the Villa D'Este, a boat ride away and one of the world's most opulent hotels, did not have such fine views.

From our hotel dining room and the terrace restaurant below were heart-catching views across the lake to glacier-carved crags. Shelley's love affair with this lake came alive. The weather seemed to change by the second, transforming the hills and lake

## FACT FILE



Jetties on Lake Como

■ Thomson Holidays (0990 502565) offers seven nights at the Belvedere Hotel, Bellagio, from £431 (children from £224), with flights, transfers and half board.

■ Tourist information on 00 39 31 950 204.

■ Reading: *The Italians*, by Luigi Barzini (Penguin, £8.99), *Eating Out in Italy*, by Diane Seed (Routledge Press, £11.95), *Lombardy, Milan and the Italian Lakes*, by Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls (Cadogan, £12.99), *Italy: Eyewitness Travel Guide* (Dorling Kindersley, £20).

from menacing to magical. Sometimes cloud would settle below us, giving a celestial view across whiteness; the sunset would usually bring a momentary stillness to the clatter of knives and forks and, when for two nights thunderstorms rent the velvet blue sky, guests stood in the rain to watch the heavenly light show.

Twenty minutes walk from the hotel is the neo-Classical 19th-century Villa Melzi d'Eril, with an azalea plantation, a modest water garden and a blue and white gazon with views across the lake. The garden is beside the municipal lido, which has a decent pizza and ice-cream parlour.

Our routine was simple: breakfast, then down the steep, cobbled streets past the bakery shops of such wonderful confections there was a pause for window shopping, past the shop selling expensive hand-made toys, past the Basilica of San Giacomo, where we lit candles and said a prayer, and out through the harbour and a small pebble beach, where glamorous Italian mothers smoothed thighs



The gardens at Villa Carlotta on Lake Como burgeon with rhododendrons and azaleas, tulip, camphor and myrrh trees

with sun lotion and watched their children swimming.

Lunch was a pizza or a picnic, then back to the hotel pool. In the afternoon the date with an ice-cream parlour took us back to the town, where the home-made ice-cream is outstanding. So, too, the shops. A photographer's shop with pictures of Bellagio in the 1950s – John Kennedy and troops of chic, sunglassesed women who seem to have left their mark on the town; clothes shops breathtaking in the grandeur of their stock, and prices.

Apart from the Venetian glass frogs/cats/horses there was some pretty, modern, silver jewellery and carnelian pendants, which seduced the children's holiday money.

Thomson Holidays arranges trips every day, at an extra cost. This is how we got to the gorgeous Isola Bella, though I wished I hadn't put the children through the coach journey of several hours. That was the most ambitious outing on offer, and there were far easier trips of an hour or so to see chocolate factories or go to Switzerland. Next time.

JANE OWEN

■ The author was a guest of Thomson Holidays.

## Popping about old Pompeii

My Italian barber's face erupted into a smile as wide as a comb. "Pompeii?" he said. "Then you must go to Ischia. It is an island with a volcano in the Bay of Naples. It is a paradise."

The next ten minutes were laced with tales of *Lachryma Christi* (wine), *limoncello* (liqueur), grapes, peaches, stewed rabbit, sulphur and thermal baths. Suddenly our family holiday, planned as a supplement to the Cambridge Latin Course, Part 1, seemed more enticing. We were headed towards a region still throbbing with volcanic pleasures.

The bus to Vesuvius leaves from Ercolano station and hairpins up the mountain, past prickly pears and vineyards. From the crater rim the view is astonishing. To the right, the sprawl of Naples. In front, the bay, curving left along the hilly Amalfi peninsula, with Capri at its tip, and on the other side Ischia, lost in the mist.

Below, to the left, Pompeii is just a distant blur in the urban network. How could Vesuvius have spat as far as that? With little difficulty – in 1631, its ashes fell on Istanbul.

Revision note: on August 24, AD 79 a mushroom cloud burst from Vesuvius at noon and the sky went dark for days. Pompeii and Herculaneum, its little neighbour, were obliterated. The Italians are still digging them out.

We started with Herculaneum, which the children enjoyed, cavorting around the gardens and squirting fountain water. The town was flooded by mud, so the villas and bathhouses still have upper storeys and seem real. You can amble round Herculaneum in half an hour.

Pompeii, buried under ash and pumice stone, is a vast, rootless maze. Bringing it to life requires an effort, on an August scorcher with your ragazzi begging for ice-cream. Look, look, imagine: the streets, the villas. Beware of the Dog mosaics, cartwheel ruts, casts of the dead, the theatres, forums, the temple to Vesuvius (sainted emperor who introduced the public lavatory), the big willies (sorry, good luck symbols). On which subject, outside a Roman brothel, I heard a

guide putting a group of nuns in the picture: yes ladies, these girls were the prize of a glass of wine. The nuns just nodded. Like us, they were trying hard inwardly to digest.

A surprise, on the edge of Pompeii, is the Villa of the Mysteries, where the rich wall-paintings seem like a lost link to the Italian renaissance. We villa-hopped some more, until we felt sufficiently like dead Romans. Then we took the jetfoil to Ischia.

Green and fruitful, Ischia was once the culmination of the Grand Tour. It is bigger than Capri and less glamorous – no Gracie Fields, just Olsen, William Walton and Alan Clark (it's his favourite foreign place). There are pretty wine-growing villages, and little towns with beaches where men fashion wicker lobster pots and women bellow at sandy children from second-floor windows. No opera could wish for a better set, or chorus.

Dominating the island is Mount Epomeo, dormant but still hissing. Its fumaroles fuelled the Roman showers which you can still use, and on some beaches look for Marina dei Moronti, you can cook potatoes and eggs in the sand, or scorch your toes in the water.

Epomeo erupted about a century after Pompeii, destroying all life on the island. Then, a century ago, it rose again and killed 3,000, in 15 seconds. Now droves of arthritic Germans throng the thermal hotels, but Ischia absorbs them all, with space to spare.

We stayed in Il Monastero, a hotel converted from a ruined monastery, perched high on a rocky outcrop. Above the hotel stands the ruined Castello Aragonese, at which Nelson took some pot shots. Below, in the crypt, are ranks of stone seats where the corpses of nuns – Poor Clares – were left upright to ruminate upon their maker.

On the hotel's terrace overlooking the bay, we followed their example each evening, inspired by ice-cold *limoncello*. Ischia proves that Italians can shake off eruptions when they want to; and after a course of Pompeii it makes a perfect summer pudding.

PETER BROWN

■ Il Monastero: 081 992 435.

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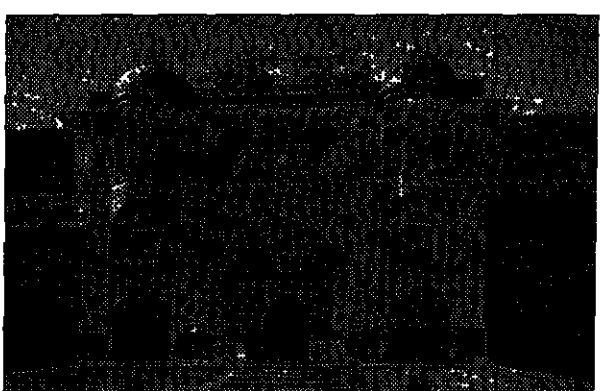
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# Drink in the atmosphere

When guests at the Hoste Arms in Norfolk asked their host, Paul Whitome, "where else can we find an inn as good as this?" it set off an idea in his mind that reached fruition this week. The Great Inns of England consortium has launched with just eight members but Mr Whitome and his co-founder, Sir Thomas Ingilby, visited more than 300 establishments in their quest.

Criteria for entry have little to do with tourist board ratings, stars or crowns: the inns should be small and personal (the largest has 26 rooms, the smallest ten), and individually run with high-quality accommodation, a bar for locals as well as visitors to have a pint in, and a restaurant where, according to Mr Whitome, "you never have to wear a tie or talk in hushed whispers over a sculpture on a plate".

The Hoste Arms is where Admiral Nelson, born in nearby Burnham Thorpe, collected his dispatches. Mr Whitome scraped back the chimney walls to their original 400-year-old brick, removed the "improvements" with which the previous brewery owners had tarted up the bars, and searched for solid old pub furniture around the country. Similar attention was then lavished on the 20 bedrooms, as well as the menus which

now feature oriental dishes as well as Brancaster mussels. Burnham oysters and casseroles of rabbit with root vegetables — with results that were duly rewarded. The Hoste Arms became Egon Ronay's Pub of the Year for 1996 while the current *Which?* Hotel Guide, never noted for its hyperbole, describes it as a "characterful inn run with passion and commitment".

After his search with Mr Whitome, Sir Thomas Ingilby

of the Boar's Head in Ripley, has also developed a clear view: "We'd like to represent traditional England, not one that is bottled or preserved. British inns have moved on and now offer fine wine, even event garden food in informal surroundings."

While the architectural merits of the eight listed inns may vary from the mainly 18th-century red-brick Hundred House in Shropshire, which would be easy to pass without

a second glance, to the chocolate-box charms of Lynmouth's Rising Sun, and interior styles range from the sturdy robustness of the Hoste Arms to the patrician elegance of the Boar's Head, the infectious enthusiasm of the proprietors, mostly the owners, for their own intimate and fascinating little bit of English local history, is an encouraging common denominator.

On Yorkshire's Ripley Castle Estate, where the Ingilby

family have lived since 1325, the Boar's Head served as a coaching inn on the Leeds to Edinburgh run, but was closed in 1919 by Sir William Ingilby, unhappy at the way his workers were lured from church. The drought lasted for 75 years until Sir Thomas reopened the inn, adding antiques from Ripley Castle and luring chefs from the Waterside Inn at Bray and the Chester Grosvenor.

The 14th-century Inn at

Whitewell in Lancashire's Trough of Bowland is still the property of the Queen as part of the Duchy of Lancaster. Its idiosyncratic proprietor, the former Lancashire cricketer Richard Bowman, says: "I don't want a car park full of BMWs. We're an old inn, not a country house hotel." It picked up the Egon Ronay Pub of the Year Award in the 1997 Guide.

The most celebrated literary pedigree among the Great Inns is claimed by the 14th-century thatched smugglers inn, The Rising Sun at Lynmouth, where R.D. Blackmore wrote part of *Lorna Doone* and Shelley spent his honeymoon with his 16-year-old bride Harriet in 1812. The other 15 bedrooms have recently been renovated.

History and high-quality accommodation — king size beds and four posters, TVs and trouser presses are pretty standard fittings — don't come cheap. The Great Inns brochure surprisingly doesn't quote prices, and its whimsical style may irritate practically minded holidaymakers; but

double rooms cost £55-£90 per night per room, with full English breakfast, and evening meals £18-£25, though most of the inns keep costs down by offering cheaper mini-breaks of two nights or more, sometimes themed.

At the 400-year-old Falcon Hotel in Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, guests can join watercolour or drawing weeks, or take courses in falconry.

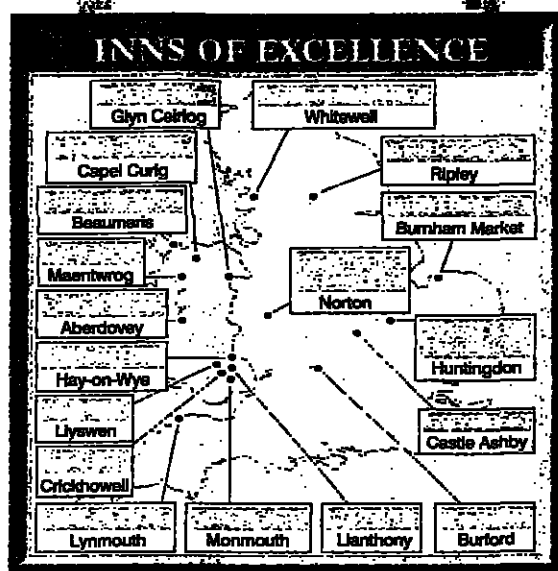
The other two inns in the consortium are the Old Bridge Inn in Cambridgeshire, good for food and wine, and the Lamb in Oxfordshire,

a smaller, traditional Cotswold inn.

While the Great Inns brochure may fail to indicate prices, it doesn't flaunt the clutch of awards its members have won throughout the 1990s. "We'd like to get away from hotel clichés about views and renowned cuisine," Sir Thomas says.

Buzzwords here are character, quality, fun and informality. Is it perhaps rather depressing, though, that so far the Great Inns of England are only in single figures?

JILL CRAWSHAW



Guests can take falconry, watercolour, drawing or printing courses at the 400-year-old Falcon Hotel in Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire

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## On Borrowed time

At the time that George Borrow undertook his great trek in search of Wild Wales in 1854, he liked nothing better than to fetch up in some village inn, where he would settle by a welcoming fire, order a quart of ale and engage in lively conversations with the natives.

Commendably, the erudite Norfolk chronicler had taken the trouble to master the Welsh language, but such application is no longer demanded of the casual visitor eager to share in the general conviviality.

The following establishments are just the kind Borrow might, and in some cases did, patronise. They are essentially "locals", frequented by the natives, but offering any traveller, who might drop in for a drink and find the company congenial, the possibility of a night's lodging. All prices are for single B&B.

Quite the most unusual is the Abbey Hotel (01873 890487 — £21) overlooking the mountain road between Hay and Abergavenny. Situated in the prior's house among the ruins of the 12th century Llanthony Abbey, the pub is in a vaulted crypt at the bottom of a flight of stone steps.

On a recent visit the dimly-lit interior was black with clerics attending an ecclesiastical convention. Sadly, the hotel is open only at weekends until the end of March.

Roger Thomas, co-author of *Great Little Places*, an annual publication listing 50 small, friendly places to stay in the Principality, makes no apologies for recommending his local, the Bear in Crickhowell (01873 810408 — from £42).

In 1993 the Bear was named best pub in Britain and the cobbled forecourt and a 19th-century timetable displayed in the bar are reminders that this 500-year-old building was formerly a coaching inn on what is now the A40. In its low-beamed bar you are likely to find visitors from the United States and Japan mingling with the locals.



The landlord of the Griffin Inn at Brecon is a fishing fan

The slate-floored bar of the Pen-y-Gwryd inn, near Capel Curig (01286 870211 — £20) in the heart of Snowdonia, doubles as a mountain rescue post. It was here the 1953 conquest of Everest was plotted and team members who scrawled their autographs on the bar ceiling for posterity included Edmund Hillary and John Hunt.

Customers at the Griffin at Llysven (01874 754241 — £34.50) are left in no doubt over the sporting preferences of proprietor Richard Stockton. Rooms are named after fishing flies and the country inn theme is carried through into the kitchen, where traditional local ingredients, of course, include salmon.

The Woolpack Inn (01691 718382 — £28) at Glyn Ceiriog, just south of Llanelgallen provided Borrow with shelter from the rain in 1854. The landlady had a wooden leg and was extremely courteous. Her successor, Sandra Usher, has two perfectly good legs but is no less attentive. Her partner, Peter, the chef, makes extensive use of produce from neighbouring farms.

Samuel Johnson and Dickens were among guests at the Olde Bull's Head in Beaumaris on the Isle of Anglesey (01248 810239 — £45), but Oliver Cromwell's forces are said to have been less considerate and commandeered the place during the Civil War.

As a Welsh speaker, Robert Hughes at the Penelrhyn Arms at Aberdovey (01654 767215 — £39) is something of a curiosity in the Principality's licensing trade, which is dominated by what Borrow would have termed Saxons. It is the AA Welsh hotel of the year.

It is ten years since Bob and Jane Evans resurrected the 450-year-old Village Green at Trellech (01600 860119 — £22.50) near Monmouth. They bought it from the Official Receiver and spent £250,000 refurbishing it.

To find a hotel in Hay-on-Wye that on closer inspection does not turn out to have been converted into a bookshop is something of a relief. Kilverts (01497 821042 — £25) survives and enjoys a good local trade — always a recommendation. Festival of literature regulars book for the following year before checking out.

Borrow was impressed with the Grapes at Maentwrog in Gwynedd (01766 590208 — £25) where he fell into discussion with a guest on the subject of predestination. What neither of them could have foreseen was the fact that the inn was destined 140 years later to win the title of best free house in Britain.

ALAN ROAD

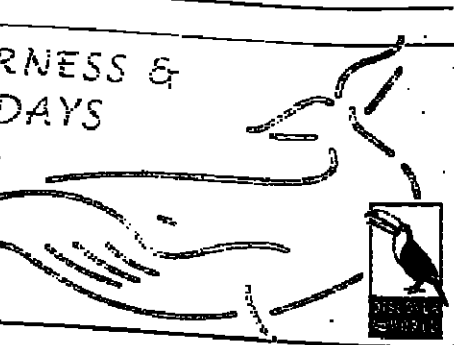
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● **Britain:** A report from the replica of Captain Cook's *Endeavour* as it heads for a voyage around these shores

# Cook's tour is the sail of the century



Captain Cook portrait, 1776

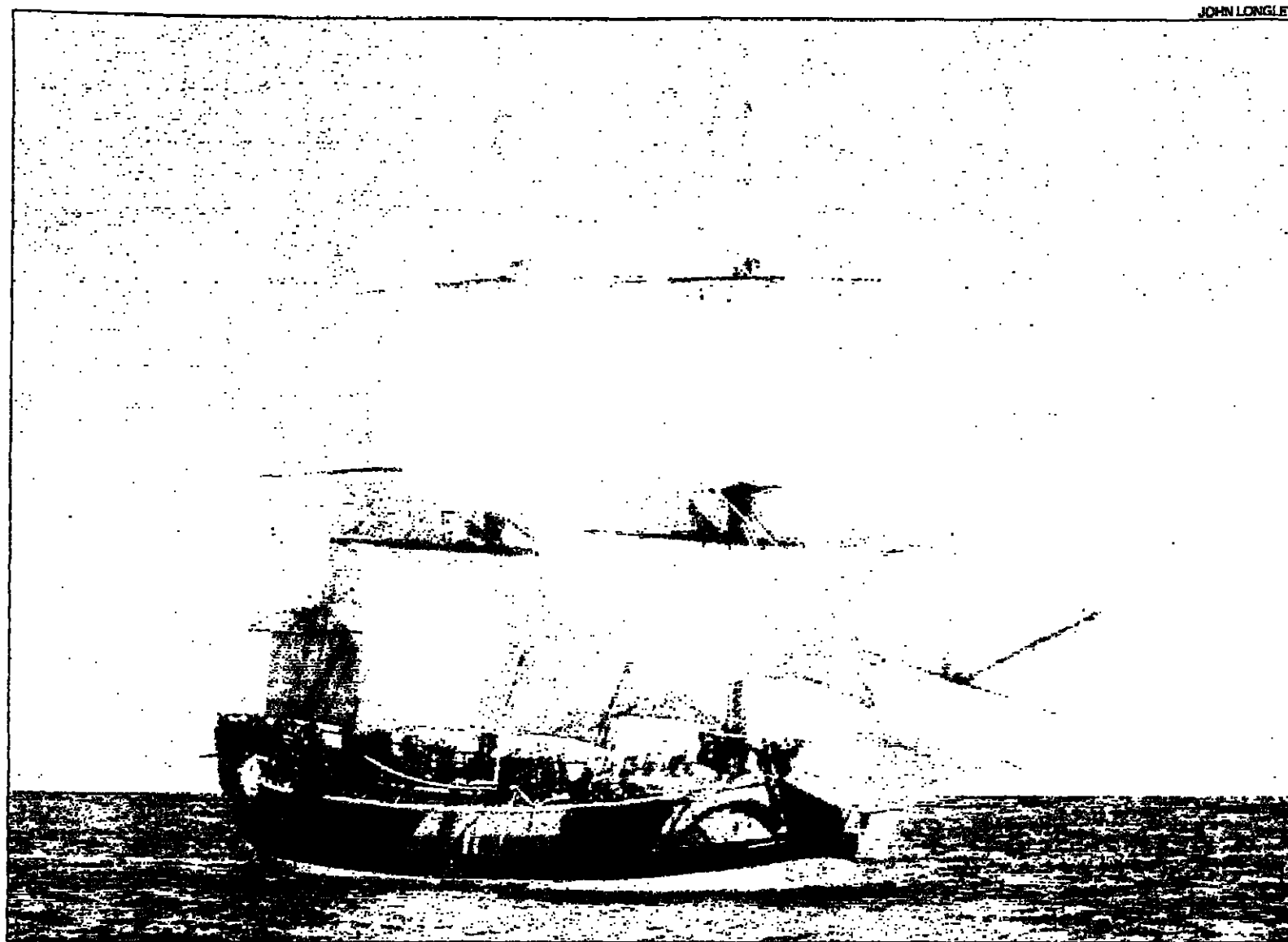
When Captain Cook's *Endeavour* left Plymouth for Tahiti on August 25, 1768, the ship had a crew of 94. At the end of the three-year expedition only 41 sailors had survived to tell the tale. Our ship, an authentic replica of Cook's *Endeavour*, measuring only 109ft by 29ft, was built from the original plans kept at the National Maritime Museum in London. So far, since leaving Fremantle, Australia, five months ago, the entire crew of 52 men and women from Australia, New Zealand, Britain and South Africa are still very much alive.

The ship is now heading for Britain and will be on view from March to October all around our coast. Indeed, tall-ship enthusiasts can book themselves on to the *Endeavour* for a three to 11-day voyage.

The *Endeavour* is operated in the same way as in Cook's day. We use wind power, but have modern engines to boost our speed if the wind drops and to steady our passage in a storm. Life below decks is much the same as the original. The 36-strong amateur crew sleep in hammocks — just like Cook's sailors — crowded together in the lower deck, with a head height of only 4ft 6in. The 14 professional crew sleep in the cabins that were occupied by Cook's sailmaker, bosun, clerk, gunner and carpenter.

The ship's master, Chris Blake, and a party of three passengers who have paid up to £25,000 each for the entire journey, sleep in swinging cots in the more spacious gentlemen's cabins on the after fall deck. These cabins were originally occupied by a Mr Green, an astronomer, and Joseph Banks, who led the scientific party. However, unlike Cook, who had to rely on the sun, the stars and his nose to chart his passage, our captain has the latest satellite communications, weather, fax, collision radar, and a Global Positioning System.

While Cook pioneered the use of lime juice to combat



Wind power: the 20th-century *Endeavour*, now sailing between Tenerife and Madeira; it left Fremantle, Australia, nearly five months ago

scurvy, and was the first to make a long voyage and not lose a man to this disease, his crew often had to endure the delights of salted meat, fermenting apples and biscuits riddled with weevils. Hidden away in the hold of our ship, where the original *Endeavour* stored supplies for its three-year voyage, we have a modern electric galley, a well stocked freezer, a proper mess room and enough fresh food to enable our chef to serve up three hearty meals a day — but we do suffer a hardship that Cook's sailors did not have to bear. This is a dry ship. No alcohol is allowed, unless the captain invites guests to his cabin for a token glass of wine.

We are observing an 18th-century way of life, not 20th-century. Life aboard this ship is simple: it consists of sailing, working, eating, sleeping and yawning with your mates. We read, paint, write, sing or play any musical instruments we have brought on board.

On a typical day at sea, we rise at seven, store the hammocks and eat breakfast. The morning programme usually involves sail handling, ship's husbandry and lectures. Professor Tim Beaglehole, the Cook authority and publisher of *The Journals of Captain*

James Cook, is on board as resident historian.

After lunch our time is usually devoted to ship maintenance — tarring, rigging, sail and rope work, sailing and painting. Towards the end of the day, sail is usually shortened for the night. The evening meal is served and hammocks are slung before we turn in at 9.30pm.

Keeping watch continues round the clock. In this part of the world the warm, clear night is enough to make anyone want to circumnavigate the world.

Tonight, God willing, we should be safely anchored in Funchal harbour, Madeira. On Wednesday the ship sets sail on the last leg of its journey to Britain, arriving for Easter. More than two centuries on, the *Endeavour* is coming home.

## RONALD GRIBBLE

● The author flew to Tenerife courtesy of Iberia Airlines (0171-830 001) and will return from Madeira courtesy of TAP Air Portugal (0171-838 0262).

● Members of the public who would like to join the ship on its UK tour should ring the *Endeavour* Foundation (0181-293 5522). Fees are from £900 to £1,200 for a three to four-day trip to £4,400 for an 11-day voyage.



Replica of the cabin used by Mr Green, an astronomer

## ENDEAVOUR FACT FILE

■ When it reaches London on March 25, the *Endeavour* will travel under Tower Bridge in full sail and firing its cannon. At Greenwich it will be open to the public, dressed with artefacts as if Cook and his crew had gone ashore. Visitors will be able to see the conditions under which Cook's pioneering voyages of exploration were made.

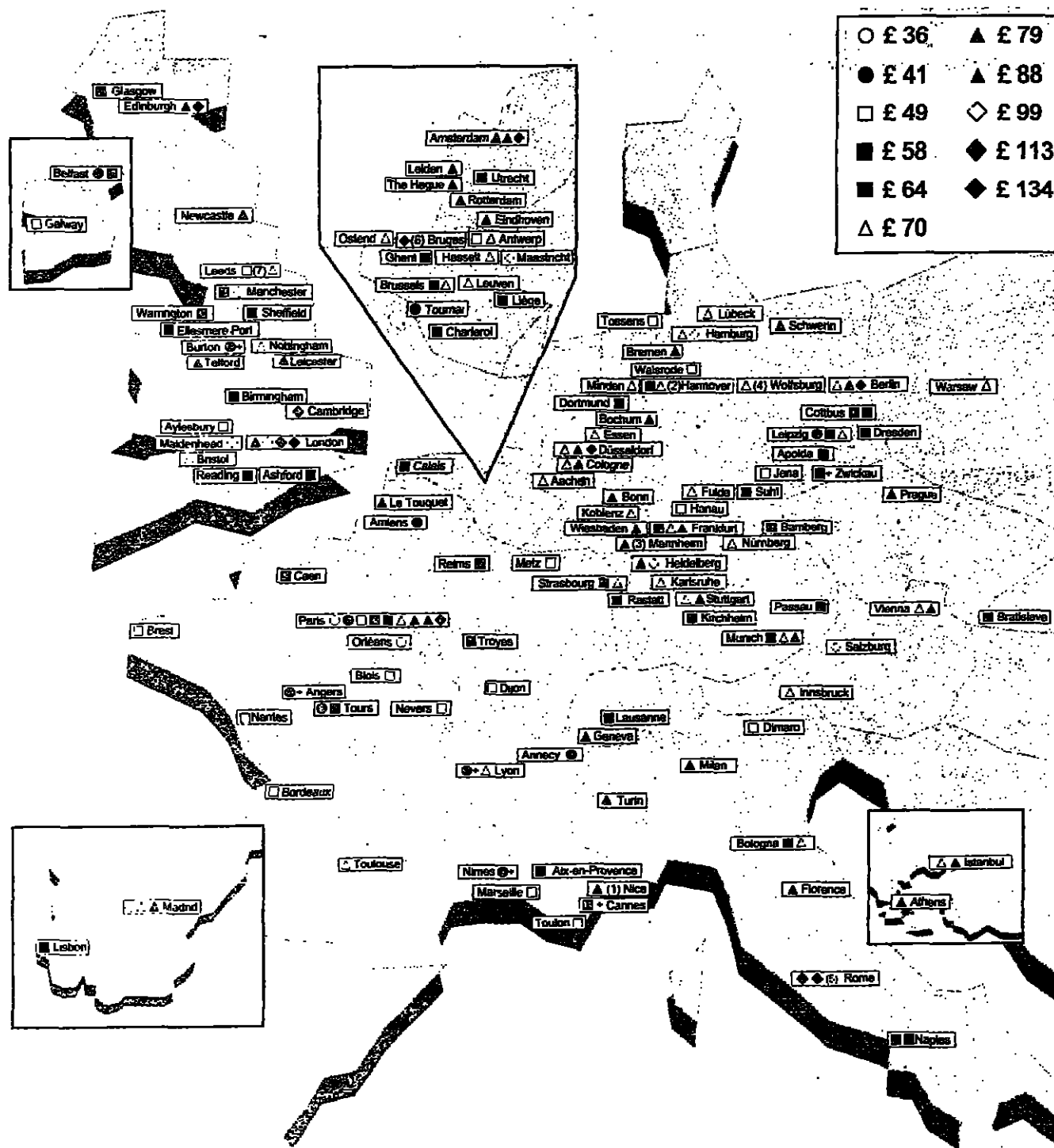
■ To coincide with the *Endeavour's* arrival at Greenwich, the National Maritime Museum is to stage a Captain Cook exhibition in the Queen's House and a Cook statue will be unveiled in the museum grounds.

■ The *Endeavour* will be open to the public at Greenwich from March 28 to April 13. The ship will then call at various ports: Great Yarmouth (April 19-23); Boston (May 2-5); Whitby, home port of the original *Endeavour* (May 10-13); Leith, Edinburgh (May 24-June 1); Inverness (June 7-15); Greenock (June 28-July 6); Liverpool (July 11-20); Fishguard (July 26-August 3); Falmouth (August 9-17); Plymouth (August 23-31); Weymouth (September 6-9); Brighton (September 13-21); St Helier, Jersey (September 27-October 5) and St Malo (October 7-12), before returning to Plymouth on October 17, where it will be prepared for a voyage to the United States.

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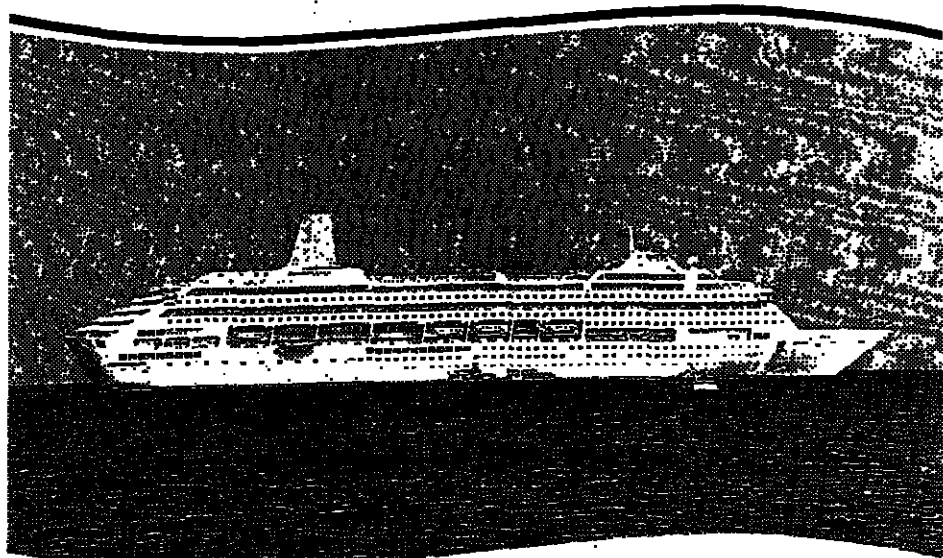
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**Skiing:** When family holidays become crippling expensive, an all-inclusive break may be the answer

# Clowning in Chamonix

Someone must have heard that my French was getting rusty. Last winter I was packed off to Club Med in Chamonix to see if its "all-inclusive" ski holiday was value for money and how I got on with the French in their oldest ski resort. Chamonix lies close to the start of the Vallée Blanche, the famous glacier run which I had always wanted to tackle.

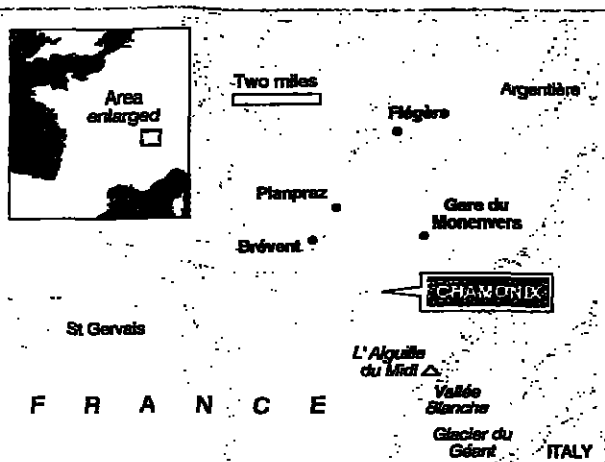
With many European lift passes now costing up to £150 a week, ski schools about £90 and the basic cost of flights and a week's half board holiday at least £500 to £800, family skiing is now crippling expensive. Some tour operators such as Club Med are, therefore, packaging an all-inclusive holiday which covers all the above, a full lunch on the mountain, wine with the midday and evening meals, and child-care. The extras are hire of skis and boots and pre/post dinner drinks.

Club Med says that its all-inclusive holiday in Chamonix works out at £761, while the full cost of a similar seven-day holiday with a rival operator could be more than £1,000.

Traditionally, Club Med conjures up visions of straw huts by beaches, people paying with beads and gastronomic French food — chic but expensive and unnerving for Brits with rusty O-level French. But now the club wants to show that it is international, affordable and can offer different types of holiday.

In Chamonix, the club is a large, rather basic hotel — no television sets or minibars in rooms — right by the small Savoy nursery slope. It has a Baby and Mini Club so that parents can leave their children with professionals during the day. There is also a large underground theatre for live entertainment in the evenings. This is put on by the club's young *gentils organisateurs* — ski guides, child minders and reps — who clearly enjoy the singing and dancing, mime shows and skits which are semi-professionally staged each night.

Although it tries hard to be pan-European, Club Med in Chamonix retains a strong



## CLUB MED FACT FILE

■ Club Med, 106 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JJ (0171-581 1161). Prices for its village in Chamonix, France: adult all-inclusive price from £761; babies from £116; children six to nine from £645; 50 per cent off children's prices on certain dates; reductions for family rooms.

■ Other "family" tour operators: Ski Spirit, Oaklands, Reading Road North, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 8AA (01252 616789); Ski Famille, Unit 9, Chesterton Mill, French's Road, Cambridge CB4 3NP (01223 363777); Ski Hillwood, 2 Field End Road, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2QL (0181-966 9993).

Gaulic streak, which may or may not be to everyone's liking. Most of its *gentils organisateurs* speak good English, but what makes the village different is the emphasis on keeping children happy. The club's resident clown/animateur, Mario, would often wander around the main dining room (there was also a smaller, quieter one), either on stilts or dressed as a hairy waitress, dropping plates and clowning it to screams of delight from the children.

After a faltering start in speaking French, I was relieved to find Club Med herding all the English speaking guests (*gentils membres*) into one group. By then we had all been fitted with skis and boots, and had been asked to estimate our skiing ability.

We were then taken up in the bubble lift to the main skiing area above Chamonix at Planpraz, where the Club Med instructors checked each

guest's ability and we were introduced to Sylphie, our French ski instructor.

The drawback of skiing in Chamonix is that the ski areas are dispersed up and down the valley and not yet linked by lifts. Serious piste bashers will ski out the Brévent and Planpraz area in a day, and it is annoying that the Flégère area, the next up the valley, has not been linked to Planpraz. This is where an all-inclusive holiday comes in handy, because Club Med buses its guests to Flégère and, later in the week, to Argentière, a far more exciting and bigger ski area overlooking the Vallée Blanche.

While the skiing above Chamonix is passable, it is the start of the 20km descent down the Vallée Blanche. This turned out to be an expensive non-event. It costs £62 to get up to the L'Aiguille du Midi, at 3,842m, and then to be guided down the run. The panoramas at L'Aiguille du Midi are breathtaking, but you are then



Bring on the clowns: that's what Club Med does at Chamonix to entertain its guests. But don't be fooled: behind the mask is an expert skier

roped to the next person to walk down a 100m ridge to the beginning of the piste down to the Glacier du Geant. From then on the skiing is mostly gentle blue runs until every skier on the mountain converges on a narrow couloir down the side of a huge cascade of vast ice blocks. This

bottleneck, and the last part of the run down to the Gare du Montvers is unexceptional.

Back in Chamonix, you are again reminded what a beautiful old town this is, with its Alpine Museum, fast-flowing river and blazing gas torches which light up smart restaurants and interesting old

shops. While Chamonix may not be a Courchevel or Val d'Isère, it has a charm of its own and Club Med's all-inclusive holiday with superb food was good value.

ALASTAIR BRETT

■ The author was guest of Club Med.

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## WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 25

BRETWALDA

(b) The title given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to Egbert of Wessex (802-839) and seven earlier English kings, who exercised a supremacy, often rather shadowy, over other English kings south of the Humber. The title probably means "overlord of the Brits". It was sometimes assumed by later kings.

PENDRAGON

(a) A title conferred on several British chiefs in times of great danger when they were invested with supreme power. Especially in Arthurian romances, to Uther Pendragon, father of King Arthur. The word is Welsh *pen* head + *dragon* (referring to the war chief's dragon standard). It corresponded to the Roman *dux bellorum*.

GOLIARDS

(a) Educated jesters and buffoons who wrote ribald Latin verse, and who were noted for riotous behaviour. They flourished mainly in the 12th and 13th centuries. The word comes from the Old French *goliard* a glutton, derived from the Latin *gula* a throat, gluttony.

PAVAN

(a) A stately Spanish dance of the 16th and 17th centuries, said to be so called because in it the dancers stalked like peacocks (Latin *pavo*), the gentlemen with their long robes of office, the ladies with trains like peacocks' tails. The pavan, like the minuet, ended with a quick movement called the *galliard*, a sort of gavotte. The etymology is uncertain, and it is also suggested that the name is from *Padova* (Padua).



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## CHESS

by Raymond Keene

GARRY Kasparov's extraordinary results in the Las Palmas and Linares tournaments, where Karpov, Kramnik, Anand, Polgar and Topalov all fell under his scythe, are likely to catapult him to an unprecedentedly high international rating of 2820. Of the leading grandmasters, only Ivanchuk held his own with the champion, drawing one, losing one, but also winning one in their three games. However, the younger generation did, the cynosure of all eyes was bound to be his clash against his supreme rival Anatoly Karpov. The two had not played since early 1994, when Karpov achieved the greatest tournament triumph of his career, winning the Linares competition by a massive margin. Both men lay claim to the World Championship; together or separately they have dominated the chess landscape for more than two decades, and Kasparov, in particular, was out for revenge.

White: Kasparov. Black: Karpov. Las Palmas, 1996. Nimzo-Indian Defence.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6  
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2

One of Kasparov's favourites against the Nimzo-Indian, though he also defeated Kramnik at Linares with 4 e3. The point of the text is to acquire the bishop pair, without allowing his pawn structure to be damaged.

4 ... 0-0 5 a3 Bxc3+  
6 Qxc3 b6 7 Bg5 Bb7  
8 a3 d6 9 f3 Nbd7  
10 Nh3 c5 11 dxc5 bxc5  
12 Be2 Qb6 13 0-0 d5

The position is in dynamic equilibrium. White has, indeed, gained the bishop pair, but Black is well entrenched in the centre.

14 Rd1 Bc6 15 Nf2 h6  
16 Bh4 Ba4 17 Rd2 Bb3  
18 Ng4

An unconventional idea which weakens his own pawn structure. Nevertheless, the open f-file which soon arises, does grant White significant attacking chances.

18 ... Ng4 19 f3 Bg5 Rb8  
20 g5 bxc5 21 Bxg5 Rb7  
22 Be7 Re8 23 Bh4 Nf8  
24 Bg3 Rd8 25 Bh4 Rdd7

Here Black could have repeated moves with 25 ... Re8, when White may have nothing better than 26 Bg3 with a likely draw. In the heat of battle, Karpov tries for more.

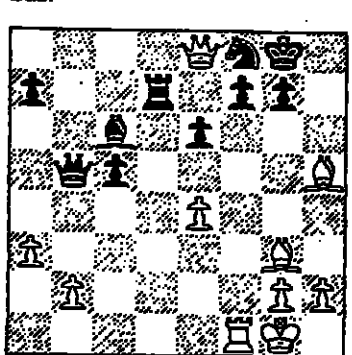
26 cxd5 Rxd5 27 a4 Rxd2  
28 Qxd2 Bx4 29 Bb5 Be8

A more combative choice is 29 ... g6, which obliges White to sacrifice material for unclear compensation after either: (a) 30 Bf6 Nh7 31 e5 Qxb2 32 Qd8+ Nf8 33 Bf3 Rd7; or (b) 30 Qh6 Nh7 31 e5 Qxb2 32 Bxb6 fxb6 33 Qxg6+ Rg7 34 Qxb6+ Kh8.

30 Bf2 Qb5 31 Qd8 Be6  
32 Bg3 Rd7

Karpov has completely missed his footing. It would have been better at move 30 to capture White pawn on b2. Now he falls under a heavy attack.

33 Qe8 — with the threat of Bb6.



33 ... Qxd1+. A convoluted way of trading queens, but if 33 ... Qb7, to lend added protection to the f7-pawn, then 34 Bd6 Rxd6 35 Bx7 still wins for White.

34 Kxd1 Rd1+ 35 Bxd1 Bxe8  
36 Bf2 Bb5+ 37 Be2 Bxe2+  
38 Kxe2 Nd7

Although Black has escaped into an endgame, the weakness of his queenside pawns, lying in the direct path of White's dangerous bishop, remains an insuperable obstacle.

39 Kd3 a6 40 Bg1 f5  
41 exd5 exd5 42 Kc4  
43 Kxc5 Nd3+ 44 Kb6

Black resigns.

## WINNING MOVE

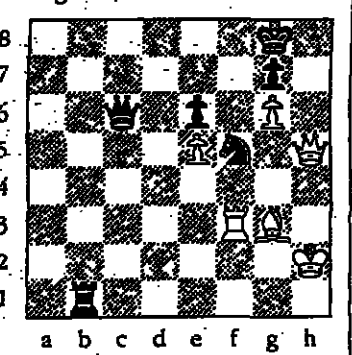
By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Dementiev vs Dzhindzhishvili, USSR 1972. The queen and knight are well known as a powerful attacking force as the two pieces complement each other very well. How did Black demonstrate this here?

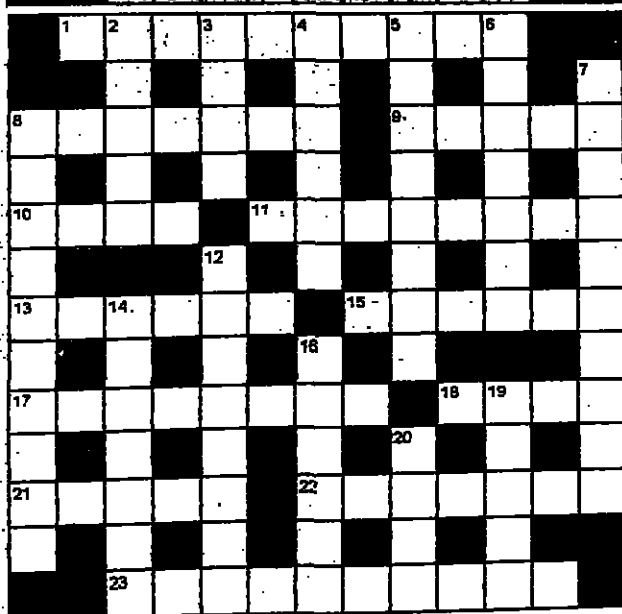
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Last week's solution: 1 Qh6

Last week's winner: D. Burnett, Billingham, Cleveland



## TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1036

ACROSS

- 1 Tiny bit (of learning) (10)
- 2 Siegfried — war poet (7)
- 3 Deeper; ring on target (5)
- 4 Lime/clay fertiliser (4)
- 5 How the unprepared are caught (2,3,3)
- 6 John — Beardsley (6)
- 7 Indelible skin picture (6)
- 8 Ceremonious Catholic service (4,4)
- 9 Amongst (4)
- 10 Char (5)
- 11 Diplomat; sort of case (7)
- 12 Methodical (10)

DOWN

- 1 Tightwad (5)
- 2 Stepped; "generations have —" (Hopkins) (4)
- 3 Pacific warming current (4)
- 4 One from Emerald Isle (8)
- 5 Firing of bullet (7)
- 6 Barset bishop's wife (Troilope) (3,7)
- 7 Share (one's) feelings (10)
- 8 With no visible join (8)
- 9 Past misdemeanours (forgiven) (7)
- 10 Condition; lands (6)
- 11 Speed of sound (4,1)
- 12 Sicilian volcano (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1035

ACROSS: 4 Abbot 7 Hot-water 8 Dice 9 Shrug off 10 Heckle  
13 Kettle 14 Moment 15 Studio 18 Reassure 19 Soda  
20 Evening 21 Limer  
DOWN: 1 Thrive 2 Streak 3 Hassle 4 Argument 5 Besotted  
6 Trifle 11 Campaign 12 Landseer 14 Morsel 15 Sterne  
16 Upshot 17 Indigo

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